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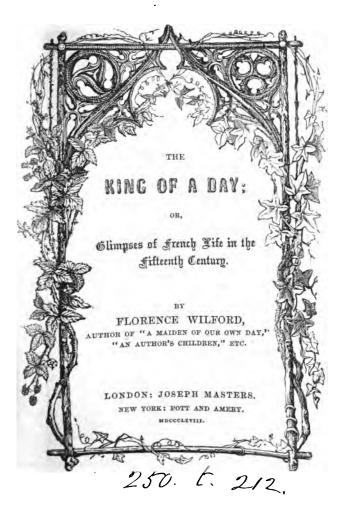
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THE KING OF A DAY;

OR,

Glimpses of French Tife in the Fifteenth Century.

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LONDON: PRINTED BY JOSEPH MASTERS AND SON, ALDERSGATE STREET.



THE KING OF A DAY;

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Glimpses of French Tife in the Fifteenth Century.

CHAPTER I.

"Begin then to chuse
This night, as ye use,
Who shall for the present delight here
Be a king by the lot."

HERRICK.



NARROW street of the olden time, such as you would scarcely find now in all Paris, though its counterpart may still be seen in the quaint old town

of Rouen: an ill-paved irregular street, with picturesque houses, whose upper stories overhung the lower and nearly met the houses opposite; a byway, one of the many connecting the two great thoroughfares of "the Ville,"—as Paris on the right bank was called in the middle ages—the Rue S. Denis and the Rue S. Martin;—that is the place in which we are going to look for our hero. The

time being the Eve of the Epiphany Festival, in the year of grace 1404.

He was standing at the door of one of the smallest of the quaint houses that winter day; and though he was very poorly clad, and his curling hair had been ruffled out of all neatness by a tumultuous game with some of the urchins of the neighbourhood, his childish figure had a certain sturdy grace, and his beautiful brown face a rare attractiveness, which made some of the passers-by turn and look at him with interest, and even induced a few to stop and enter into conversation with him.

"I am eight years old, and my name is Jean, and they call me 'Cabaret,' because I was born at an inn," he said, as quick as lightning, in answer to the inquiries of a respectable-looking citizen's wife, who, struck by his pretty face, had paused to question him. Meantime he was looking not at her, but at a small company of horsemen, who were ad-

vancing up the street.

The good woman gave her high cap a little toss, which set its ribands dancing, stroked down the folds of her short woollen petticoat, and went her way; somewhat disgusted with the indifference which the little fellow showed to the notice of so well-dressed a matron. Jean, recking nothing of this, stepped over the threshold and out into the road, gazing with a sort of rapture at the approaching cavalcade. Presently he turned his head back towards the house he had left. "Mother!" he called, "I think it is the Duke of Bourbon; the two serving-men that ride in front have a blue fleur-de-lys for their badge."

There was no answer; but the sound of a woman's voice was heard singing within, and probably the notes of the song drowned the child's words, and prevented his announcement being heard by the singer. Yet her lay—unconsciously to herself—had greater significance for those now advancing, than for any other knights and nobles in the good city of Paris; for she was singing one of the popular ballads about the murder of Blanche of Bourbon, whose story was still fresh in all men's minds.

Translated into English, and modernized, it

might run somewhat in this way-

"Queen Blanche kneeleth lone in her room,
—Woe, woe, to the Fleur-de-lys!—
A page stealeth soft through the gloom,
Lighteth down on his knee.

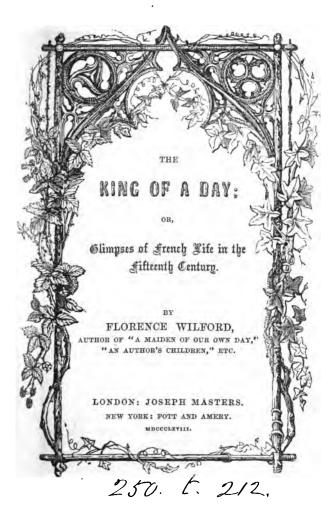
'My master, the king, sends thee wine,'
—Woe, woe, to the Fleur-de-lys!—
'He prays thee to drink, Lady mine.'
'It is well,' answers she.

She hath taken the cup in her hand;
See, it droopeth, the Fleur-de-lys!—
'I haste to obey his command,
I will drink,' sigheth she.

'But oh France! oh my country! farewell,
Adieu, land of the Fleur-de-lys!
Gentle sisters, fond brother, farewell;
For I die young,' saith she.

She hath lifted the cup to her lip,
—Direst woe to the Fleur-de-lys!—
But she pauseth once more ere she sip,
Kneeleth low on her knee.

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escaped an accident a few seconds before. "It is not the Duke of Bourbon," he said to himself; "they are both too young. I suppose it must be the Duke's sons; the Count of Clermont, and that other. How I wish I had a horse to ride like theirs, a horse that would toss its head and put its feet up grandly like that! What are they coming back for. I wonder?"

He was not long left in doubt: the young noblemen stopped when they came close to him, and the younger of the two leaning down from his saddlebow, asked kindly, "What is your name, my child, and your father's? and who was that we heard

singing in your house?"

"It was my mother," said the boy, answering the last question first: "I wish she would not sing such sad songs, but she ever does, my Lord, except when she sings to me. My father is Jacques d'Orronville—at least the neighbours call him so, because he is a Picard, and comes from Orronville; and my own name is Jean."

He did not mention this time the sobriquet which he had received from having been born in an inn, for he suddenly bethought him that he had been loquacious enough already. There was an innocent fearlessness in his manner, and a grave inquiring look in his lovely large eyes, which was indescribably winning. Even his namesake, the satirical Jean de Clermont, felt it to be so. "Go, fetch one of your parents to speak with us," said he aloud; and then aside to his brother he added, "'Tis a well-favoured child, certainly. I commend your idea of choosing him for our Twelfth-day king."

At the Count's command, the child darted through the small living-room, on which the front door opened, into an inner chamber, from which he presently issued again, bringing his mother with She looked a little fluttered—naturally—at being called to speak with such grand personages; but there was a simple sweet dignity about her, uncommon in persons of her class; and though there were marks of pinching poverty in her dress, and her hands were rough with toil, her face was no ordinary one, but had a peculiar touching beauty, which its extreme attenuation and pallor rather enhanced than diminished. As she stood before them. curtseying lowly with unconscious grace, the young nobles felt instinctively that this woman of the people was pure and noble-minded as any high-born lady of their acquaintance.

They told her that they had been struck by her son's bright face, and asked, courteously enough, what she intended to make of him, and what was

her husband's occupation, and her own.

"My husband is a lance-maker by trade, an it please your lordships," she answered quietly; "but he is infirm and crippled, and can now do nought for his living. Thanks be to the saints, I am able at most times to earn enough for all our wants; and the good brothers of the Congregation of the Trinity, hard by, are always ready to befriend us."

"And your son, what mean you to make of him?"

"I know not, my Lords; he must work for his living somehow, when he is old enough. He will be proud and pleased to earn money for his father—will you not, my little Jean?" And she put her

hand under his chin and lifted his face up to her tender gaze.

"Ay, that will I," said he blithely; "I mean to ask Master Simon, the armourer, to take me into

his workshop."

"But would you not like better to be brought up as a scholar, and to grow to be a wise and learned man, an honour to your parents?" asked Louis of Bourbon eagerly.

The child only stared in answer, it was a notion he had never contemplated; but his mother glanced up quickly at the boy-prince, and reading somewhat of his benevolent intentions in his fair young face,

answered gratefully,

"Glad, indeed, my Lord, should I be to see my little Jean a holy clerk, skilled in all good learning; though neither his ambition nor mine hath ever

reached so high till now."

"Well, then," said Jean de Clermont, who was in haste to have the matter settled and done with, "bring him to the Hôtel Bourbon early to-morrow morn, and if the Duke objects not we will make him our Twelfth-day king. He shall be dressed in brave attire and feasted royally, and afterwards a purse of money shall be given him to provide for his education and maintenance; so that he may become a learned priest instead of only a working-man."

The mother's face looked brimful of surprise, and of questions which she was too modest to put; but little Jean, less scrupulous, cried out, "What sort of king shall I be, my Lord? Shall I have a gold crown, and will everybody mind me, and shall I

have heralds to go before me?"

"I do not know about the heralds," said the Count, laughing; '" but you shall have a crown certainly, and we will all be your vassals for the day." He looked as if he were about to ride off without more ado; but Lord Louis, mindful of the anxiety written on the mother's countenance, hastened to explain. "You do not know, perhaps, that it is the custom of our noble father, every year, on the day of the kings, to take some poor child and make of him a king for the nonce, and afterwards to take care that he be educated in some college or monastery, and his maintenance duly provided for. hath he done ever since his return from captivity in England, now many years ago; and as at this moment there doth not happen to be any child in whom he feels special interest, he hath left it to us to choose a king for the morrow. Are you content that we should make choice of your son?"

"I am well content, my Lord, for my own part, and grateful to boot; and Father Ambrose, at the monastery, can tell you that my Jean has good parts, and is like to make an apt scholar if he will but give his mind to it; but I know not whether

my husband—''

"We cannot tarry longer," said the Count, whose high-mettled horse was pawing the ground impatiently as if ready to burst away; "I doubt not that your husband will give his consent willingly if you make it plain to him, that by choosing your son as our little king we undertake to befriend him through all his after-life. Good day to you.—Come, Louis!" and with a good-natured careless nod he dashed off.

The more thoughtful Louis tarried a moment still.

"If your husband likes not the plan you can let us know," he said, not without a touch of secret wonder that any demur could be made to accepting the offered favour; "but be very sure my gracious father will be good to the child, and he shall have a right happy day to-morrow, if you will let him come. Farewell to you now—and to you, little Jean."

Jean's mother never forgot the kindly grace of that farewell; the beaming smile shed on her and her son from those boyish eyes, as Louis turned to go. She had marked with regret how pale the young noble's cheek was, how thin and sharply-cut his delicate aquiline features, what a contrast he formed to his brother, whose robust and healthful manhood was visible at the first glance. "The saints preserve him, and reward him for his goodness!" she said softly, looking after him. "How like you the prospect of being a play-king, my Jeannot?"

"I like it well," he answered, raising his head proudly as if he already felt the crown encircling it. "I shall be grandly arrayed, shall I not? and able to do all that I please. Will they let you and my father be there to see?"

"Nay, what should a poor woman like me do in the Duke's palace? and your father could not get thither even if he would. We must go and tell him of all this. I fear me he will not like the plan much."

A shadow fell on her calm brow, and her fingers began to toy nervously with a small wooden cross which hung around her neck, as she returned to the inner room, leaving the child outside. Evidently she felt more timidity in facing her husband than in conversing with princes, and no wonder; for

before she could open her lips he began to grumble

angrily at her for having been away so long.

In looking at Jacques d'Orronville, howeverbetter known among his friends by the sobriquet of "le mécontent"—charity might well pardon the sharpness of his tongue, for his expression betokened the presence of constant physical pain. His forehead was scarred, he had lost his right arm, and during this winter weather acute rheumatism was added to his other sufferings; so that as he sat crouching by the wood-fire, which burnt dimly on the hearth, he looked like one whom wounds, poverty, and misfortune, had reduced to the lowest depths of misery. Scarcely the very lowest though, for his threadbare garments were neatly patched and darned, and there were traces in the room, as well. as in his dress, of a woman's skilful and tender Jacques le mécontent, all mutilated and beggared as he was, had such a wife as few peers of the realm possessed.

She bore his reproaches now with the utmost patience, and when they ceased told him all that the young lords had said to her, urging him with gentlest persuasion to consent to their plans for her son. "For it will doubtless prove a great benefit to Jeannot, the brave boy, the jewel!" said she tenderly, "although, indeed, it will be hard parting with him if we should be called on to do so."

"Then why should I put myself to pain for any duke in the world?" grumbled Jacques surlily. "He will give our Jeannot a purse of money, quotha? but pray where gets he the gold but from the pockets of our poor citizens, oppressed by unlawful taxes?"

"Nay, nay," rejoined his wife; "men whisper that of the Duke of Orleans, but none dare to say it of the good Duke of Bourbon; he is ever more ready to give to the people than to take from them."

"He is the best of a bad lot, but they are serpents all!" said the impracticable Jacques. "Do you think I forget how the streets ran with wine and milk from the fountains when our king was crowned, and how those same streets ran with blood but three years afterwards, the blood of honest men like myself? When three hundred of our citizens were hanged and drowned without trial, did the Duke of Bourbon do aught to prevent it, prythee?"

"He did what he could, doubtless, for he is ever merciful. Do you not remember, dear husband, how one from the Bourbonnois told us but lately that when a list was brought to the Duke of the ill-deeds of his own vassals, he asked for one of their good deeds; and not finding any such, did presently burn the bad one? I think you need not scruple to let our Jeannot taste of his bounty; and indeed, it were scarcely wise to refuse the favour of so great a prince."

"Ay, wise, wise; that is the way you always talk, Marie! You will pander to the great, let me say what I may; and will risk neither life nor limb

in the good cause."

"Not when it is a question of risking your limbs rather than mine own," said the good woman, with a smile; "for methinks, dear Jacques, you have none to spare; but even for your sake I would not do aught of evil knowingly. Only trust me, it cannot be evil to accept the good Duke's kindness for

our little Jean; you will let me take him to the Hôtel Bourbon to-morrow, will you not?"

"Ay, ay, take him to destruction, and let them make a shaven monk of him. It is the way with you women," grumbled Jacques, unmollified; and probably his real consent would never have been obtained, but that Jean himself made his appearance at this moment and took upon him to plead his own cause with his father.

Jacques' grudge against the whole race of aristocracy, and especially against the royal dukes, was a thing of long standing. As a young man he had joined heart and soul in the revolt of the Maillotins -so called from their having armed themselves with the leaden mallets which they found in the Hôtel de Ville—had been enrolled among the civic guard established in those days of rebellion, and had received the wounds which left him maimed and helpless for life, while defending the barricades erected in the streets of Paris against the soldiers of the It had been a vain defence; the army, just returned from the victorious field of Rosebecque. soon overpowered the citizens; the taxes for the abolition of which the Maillotins had struggledand at first not unsuccessfully—were all reimposed, the chief rebels put to death, and the others forced to resign themselves to the despotic rule of the young king, Charles the Sixth, or rather to that of his uncles, the ambitious Dukes of Anjou, Berri, and Burgundy.

Jacques le mécontent only escaped punishment by flying from Paris, and taking refuge in the little town of Orronville in Picardy, which was his wife's native place, and where she had some friends. abode there some twelve years, and then a longing seized him to revisit Paris—for he was a thorough Parisian at heart; so he set off suddenly to return thither, taking his wife with him, though she was at that time very unfit for a journey. At an inn some miles from Orronville, where they stopped to rest, little Jean was born; and as soon as Marie was able to rise they journeyed on to their destination, and finally established themselves in the small street in which we have found them. It was supposed by the neighbours, and by their little Jean himself, that they were all Picards; and few imagined that they had been in Paris before, or that Jacques had had any share in the revolt of 1383.

Twenty years had passed away since those days of fruitless rebellion, but without bringing much change for the better. The king was mad, though with occasional intervals of sanity; the English were threatening war; the queen and her gay brother-in-law, the Duke of Orleans, were squandering in luxury the public revenues; and it was rumoured that heavier taxes were to be imposed to replenish the treasury thus exhausted. "Evil men, and evil times!" Jacques would sigh to himself as he sat thinking: and there was indeed much cause for the exclamation, for men with evil ambitions and rivalries did abound at that period, and evil men make evil times; but there were good men and true in those days too, though the surly Jacques would scarcely credit it, and pre-eminent among these shone Jean's would-be patron, Louis Duke of Bourbon. surnamed "le Bon." Uncle to the king on

the mother's side, and therefore not endowed with such authority as Charles's three paternal uncles, already mentioned—he had comparatively little share in the government of the kingdom: but in his private capacity, as friend and adviser of his unhappy nephew, he had considerable influence, and ever exerted it on the side of right and justice. was greatly loved and trusted by the king, because, says the chronicler, "he had never served any master but him, nor had any other ambition or design than for the good of the state," and he appears to have been almost equally a favourite with the peo-Even crabbed Jacques kept a warm corner in his heart for him, though he chose to abuse him in common with all dukes and princes; partly because he found it next to impossible to say a good word of any one, and partly because he saw that these indiscriminate railings annoyed his wife. Yes; for this gentle loving wife was made a constant victim to the poor man's ill-humour. He did, indeed, partly perceive her merits, and would perhaps have allowed with the Scotch proverb, that "next to nae wife, a gude wife is the best;" but he was very far from prizing her as she deserved. The only person whom he treated with any indulgence was his son, whom he suffered to be as free-spoken as himself, delighting in his saucy wit and merriment, and not even caring to subject him to a wise control.

Thus the bright little fellow had grown into a much more self-willed, pert, and confident specimen of humanity, than children in mediæval times were usually suffered to be; and had it not been for his mother's teaching, would have become a very graceless little mortal indeed. But she, sweet soul! had done her best to counteract the effects of his father's spoiling, and to train him in all good and courteous ways; and he loved her well enough to respond to her influence in some degree, though not so entirely as might have been desirable.

Grumble as he might, Jacques was not in reality altogether ill-pleased at the thought of securing the good Duke's protection for his little son; and as for the boy himself, having once won from his father the desired permission, he was in such a state of excited joy and wonderment at the thought of all that was to befall him on the morrow, that he could scarce be still or silent a minute, but kept hazarding droll conjectures as to what the Duke would say to him, what sort of robes would be put on him, and what kind of cheer might be expected at the princely His father humoured his garrulity, and told him wonderful hearsay anecdotes of grand repasts given by the nobles and clergy; beginning with one by a certain Abbé, at which three thousand of the choicest dishes were set before six thousand guests, and ending with a description of the festivities which had taken place more recently at the Duke of Berri's residence, on the occasion of the marriage of the Duke's daughter, the Countess d'Eu, with that very same young Count of Clermont whose acquaintance Jean had made that day. presently Jacques grew weary and fell into a doze; and then the mother, drawing her boy towards her, soothed him into a graver mood by wistful caresses and gentle counsels, telling him the beautiful story of the Wise Men from the East, and the star which went before them and guided them to the mangercradle of the Babe of Bethlehem; interweaving it, however, with the legendary lore of the period, which threw a strange halo round "the three kings, Gaspar, Melchior, and Balthasar;" and strayed far beyond the simple Bible narrative, into the wide field of conjecture and romance.

Then, seeing that her husband was fast asleep. and that it wanted still an hour to supper—partaken

of in those times about four o'clock, she stole forth to a church near, taking the child with her, and kneeling down in the shadow of one of the pillars, prayed, silently but with unutterable feryour. her husband, to her son, to the young princes, she had uttered no word of regret that the destiny marked out this day for her little Jean might perhaps take him from her loving arms, and leave her heart more lonely than before; serenely, almost joyously, she had dwelt on the bright prospect opening for him; but now, although her grief scarcely shaped itself into distinct complaint or petition, her tears fell as she recited the Pater-noster, and in her fervent Aves there mingled some such meaning as this: "Holiest of Mothers, most favoured yet most sorrow-stricken of all mothers, help me, a mother too, but poor and ignorant and sinful, to bear bravely and patiently the parting with mine only son!"

Then she rose up, and went home, calm and cheerful once more, a brave-hearted devout woman. Her son would be benefited, what matter if she suffered? It was the will of GoD, who had made

mothers' hearts so keen to feel.



CHAPTER II.

"His sport was fair, his joyaunce innocent, Sweet without soure, and honey without gall, And he himself seemed made for merriment, Merrily masking both in bowre and hall."

HE early morning found Jean and his mother in waiting at the gates of the Hôtel Bourbon, the court-yard of which was astir with esquires, grooms, and pages, some of whom were preparing to set forth with their lord to attend Mass at Notre Dame, while others were making arrangements for the festivities which were to take place later in the day. It was a cold wintry morn, and a mist-wreath hung over the Seine, but it was not one of our dense English fogs, and the sun bade fair to vanquish it ere the day were many hours older. The air was musical with the voices of innumerable bells, for the myriad steeples of Paris seemed to vie with one another in sending forth these gladsome sounds to greet the dawn of the great Festival of the Epiphany; and distinct above all the rest fell on little Jean's ear the deep-toned peal from the great tower of the Louvre close at hand, though, indeed, its sonorous cadence was rather felt than remarked by him, so full was his mind of all that was about

to happen.

Once admitted into the court-yard, he could think of nothing but the gaily-caparisoned horses which the grooms were leading up and down; and had not his mother kept his hand tightly in her clasp and drawn him on, he would certainly have lingered among them instead of advancing steadily towards the princely mansion. Just as they reached the open door of the great hall, they espied among the numerous servitors, who were passing out and in, one of those who had been in Lord Louis's train the preceding day; and he recognised them almost at the same instant, and came kindly towards them, greeting Jean by name, and offering to lead him into the Duke's presence.

"Then I had best give him over to your care, good sir," said Marie timidly. "I trust he will be good, and show himself grateful to our Lord the Duke." Then turning to her child she added, "Adieu, my Jean, you will return to me for this night at least, I trust; and I shall go now straight to the Cathedral, and watch at the door to see you

pass in all your finery."

"Good-bye, dear mother," said the child; and as she let go his hand he murmured regretfully, "I should be a great deal more happy in being a king if you might be my queen and sit beside me."

Yet, child-like, he shook off the regret, and wellnigh forgot the wish as soon as she had left him, and trudged blithely across the hall by the side of the servitor, entering unabashed, though full of wondering expectation, into the tapestried chamber where sat the good Duke of Bourbon. Here, however, some measure of awe fell upon him at the sight of the princely old man—surrounded by a gallant group of noblemen, and gentlemen of the household—whom his conductor designated as his patron, the Duke; and scarcely would he have dared to advance, but that Lord Louis stepped forward and beckoned to him encouragingly, at the same time calling the Duke's attention to him by saying, "See, here is our little king, sir; we must make haste to welcome him, and to robe and crown him, for it is nearly time to set forth."

The Duke smiled, and turned to greet the little fellow, who, rosy and bashful, scarcely dared to lift his eyes from the ground, and so could see nought but the rich robe of crimson silk trimmed with costly fur, and the velvet mantle embroidered with golden fleurs-de-lys, and could not discern how sweet and benignant a face was that of the wearer of these splendid garments.

Louis of Bourbon, at sixty-six years of age, was still erect and active, and notwithstanding that he had laid aside his armour and was now clad in the garb of peace, had a martial air, worthy of the friend of Du Guesclin, and the founder of the military Order of l'Ecu d'Or. His countenance was kind and thoughtful in its expression, the mouth very sweet though firm, the eyes bright, and ever and anon gleaming with arch humour, though on the brow there was a shadow which many great and serious cares—such as the disturbed state of the kingdom, the madness of the sovereign, and the

great schism which had so long distracted the Church—had left indelibly there.

His voice was pleasant in tone, and his manner full of kindness, as, bending down, he said gently, "You are welcome, my little one; look up, and do not be frightened; I trust we shall be able to make

this quite a gala day to you."

"Thanks, noble sir," stammered the child, but could get no further; seeing which, Lord Louis said with a smile, "You will find your tongue presently, when you are the little king, and we your humble attendants. Come, come and be dressed. I will myself see that you are attired in all the finery befitting a monarch!" And, followed by several esquires and pages, he led the child away.

Those who had seen Jean in his threadbare suit, advancing clumsily, with his head hung down as though contemplating his own bare feet, could scarcely recognize him when he reappeared, with head erect, eyes sparkling, and step firm; his small figure clad in a tunic of rose-coloured silk trimmed with ermine; a mantle of cloth of gold depending from his shoulders; a jewelled necklace, to which was attached a gold star embossed with the figures of the three Eastern kings, around his neck; a tiny fur cap, with a white plume fastened into it by a diamond sprig, on his head; and his feet encased daintily in embroidered shoes, square at the toea fashion which had replaced the long-pointed shoes. à la poulaine, which had been declared by Charles the Fifth to be "contre les bonnes mœurs, et inventés en dérision du Créateur!"

With the royal garments Jean had assumed also

a right royal bearing; and though the changing colour of his cheek still seemed to show that his delight was tempered by bashfulness, his beautiful eyes were all afire with joy and pride; and so well did this glow of excitement and the unwonted costume set off his natural advantages of face and figure, that, as he advanced into the room, a pale grave gentleman, who was seated near the Duke, said softly, "By S. Denis! a noble-looking child! Is he not, my Lord? Among all the children who have tasted of your bounty I have never before seen one so comely or so graceful in bearing."

"True, De Véeuse," said the Duke smiling; "he has certainly a great advantage over his predecessors, more especially the two last, one of whom I remember was rather lame, and the other quite a marvel of ugliness. They were good children, though, and it was not without regret that I heard a short while since that the lame one—the little Jacquot—is dead; he went to his rest on the Eve of S. Thomas. The ill-favoured one, whose name I forget, has decided on being a monk as soon as he shall be old enough; and I have given my consent, thinking it a good vocation for him."

"In that the cowl will conceal his ugliness?" archly suggested the gay young Count of Clermont, the Duke's eldest son.

Louis's eyes shot out a mirthful gleam at this, though he answered somewhat gravely, "Nay, nay, my son, I had better and weightier reasons. But now we must get to horse, for time presses.—Sound the call, Eustache!—And you, my little monarch."

addressing Jean, "let us attend you to your litter, it is waiting for you in the court-yard."

At the word "litter" the rosy lips of the little king wore a decided pout. "Am I not to ride one of those beautiful horses which I saw out yonder?"

he boldly inquired.

"'Tis an ambitious urchin!" exclaimed the Duke, laughing; while all around looked astonished at the boy's audacity. "But listen, my little sovereign, I do not want to have any broken bones to answer for; so, as no doubt you are not used to bestride a horse, it will be best for you to ride in the litter prepared for you. You will be in good company, for the ladies will proceed to church in the same manner."

"Simon the armourer has often let me mount the horses whose steel trappings he makes," rejoined the undaunted Jean, but in a more modest tone than that in which he had spoken before. "And indeed, my Lord, he said the other day that I had as good a seat as any knight of them all. I wish I might ride to church like a real king!"

"Well, you are monarch here, and so entitled to choose," said Duke Louis playfully, "therefore you shall have your wish; but pray, your majesty, be pleased to remember that youth should be ever

modest, even when clad in kingly dress."

"Thanks, thanks, gracious sir," said the child, thinking a great deal more of the permission to ride on horseback than of the injunction to modesty, but something in the fair face of the young Lord Louis made him wonder for a moment whether he had been guilty of the overboldness which his mother had warned him against.

Just then a rustle of silk was heard in the hall. and down flocked the ladies—the Duchess of Bourbon and her daughter Isabelle, the Countess of Clermont, and a bevy of their friends and attendants; the married ladies wearing the immense towering head-dresses which Queen Isabeau had brought into fashion, with two horns on either side, from which floated ribbons of divers colours; the maidens arraved in somewhat less ponderous head-gear, consisting of only one peaked erection, with a long veil depending from the top. They took their places in the litters, while the little king looked on, congratulating himself on not being obliged to follow this feminine example; though somewhat strange did he feel when he was presently lifted upon a stately charger, arrayed in velvet housings embroidered with golden fleur-de-lys. He held up his head, however, and showed himself worthy of the commendation which Simon the armourer had bestowed on him—so much so, indeed, that as he rode out of the court-yard between the Duke of Bourbon and the Count of Clermont, they interchanged a smile of amused approval, as much as to say, "The little fellow did not boast of himself without cause." They rode rather slowly on his account; yet the river was crossed, and the Cathedral reached only too soon for Jean, who was too well amused with his progress through the streets to be quite in the humour for devotion.

The great square was well-nigh filled with the retinues of noble lords and princes, and the Dauphin himself had come thither that day to implore the intercession of the kings of the East in behalf of

his father, at this time suffering from one of his periodical attacks of insanity. The paved interior of the church soon became covered with worshippers. some glittering in silk and velvet and cloth of gold, some in the distinctive dresses of the various confreries, others in penitential garments of black, grey, or white, and others again in the simple cassocks of homely stuff, which marked them out as belonging to the poorer classes. There they knelt together even the homeliest dress catching rich gleams of orange, purple, and crimson lustre from the gorgeous windows which then adorned the Cathedral -there they knelt, while on either side of them were ranged the long lines of statues, "kneeling, standing, equestrian, men, women, children. kings. bishops, soldiers," all culminating in that colossal statue of S. Christopher—the great strong simpleminded hero of mediæval legend,—the fame of which was spread throughout Christendom. they knelt, the eyes of most of them turned towards the high altar, and towards the quaint representation fixed above it of the event which they had come thither to commemorate. In no wise strange or childish, but very beautiful, no doubt, seemed to them that artificial group of cunning workmanship, those waxen figures of the mother-maid and her wondrous Child, that venerable S. Joseph leaning on his staff, those three adoring kings in regal robes and crowns; nor did the quaintly-shaped manger. and the ox and ass peeping out as it were from behind it, at all lessen to their apprehension the solemnity of the mimic scene.

The Duke of Bourbon and his family held illu-

minated missals in their hands, for they could readan accomplishment by no means universal even so late as the fifteenth century—and the eyes of the young Lady Isabelle and her brothers were constant to their books, while other less instructed or less devout damsels and gallants were staring, whispering, and sometimes even laughing, unmindful of the holy words uttered by the Priests and choir. Our little king was among the illiterate ones, so first he looked well at the waxen group above the altar, then at the rich dresses of the bishops and priests officiating, then at the more gaudy attire of the worshippers around him; and scarcely would his thoughts have turned at all to the religious service, in which he was supposed to be engaged, had it not been for two sights which met his roaming gaze. The first was that of a poor woman, clad in a cloak and hood of coarse grey stuff, who knelt a little apart from the rest of the people, her hands reverently clasped, her eyes either drooped devoutly or raised to dart swift glances of infinite but anxious love on the bright face and gaily robed form of the little Jean himself. In this woman he recognized his mother. The second was that of the evident devotion of the young Lord Louis. sweet, and good, as his countenance had seemed while he was playfully arraying his father's protégé in garments of mimic royalty, it was still sweeter and more beautiful now as he knelt at his prayers, his head a little bent, his dark eyelashes sweeping. his almost colourless cheek, his whole face settled into the pure grave repose which one often sees in the carved faces of the corbels supporting the arches

of our old cathedrals. If, to quote the words of a miracle-play of the period, his sister Isabelle looked "fair and fresh as rose on thorn," his was the lilywhiteness which, in its almost unearthly purity, seemed to draw the thoughts of the gazer upwards to his unseen angel guardian, who doubtless even then was wafting up the boy's pure orisons to the ear of Him whose face those blessed angel-watchers do "always behold." Reminded of his own duty by the anxious gaze of his mother, and by the rapt devotion of the young noble at his side, Jean at length recalled both eyes and thoughts from their wanderings; and while the sacred chants arose from the lips of the choristers, flooding the vast cathedral with music, his childish soul rose a little way with them; in a simple ignorant fashion, yet honestly enough, he lifted up his heart towards the Divine Babe of Bethlehem, and adored with the Magi.

Ere long the service was over, and out flocked the congregation, the Duke of Bourbon and his family pausing on their way to horse, to distribute alms to the beggars who crowded round the cathedral porch. When once more mounted on his splendid charger, Jean looked about for his mother. There she was, standing within the shadow of the doorway; and oh, what fervour of admiration was in those loving eyes of hers! The child scarcely knew what a gallant picture he made, and how well his gauds became him, till he saw it all written there in his mother's face. He lost sight of her again as he rode on, but this time he did not forget her; and when he arrived at the Hôtel Bourbon,

and was placed in the seat of honour at the great banqueting-table in the hall, he did truly wish that his mother were sitting beside him as his queen. Before the banquet was served, the ceremony was gone through of appointing attendants of various ranks and ages to wait upon our little king during the meal, and be at his bidding throughout the day. The Duke himself assigned them their various offices with many playful formalities; and great was the mirth when Lord Louis was chosen as body-squire-or "squire of honour," as it was often called by way of honourable distinction-and made graceful obeisance to his little master and monarch, promising to do him true fealty and service in that important capacity. Jean entered heartily into the spirit of the jest, saluted his new courtiers with great readiness and naïveté, and found royal prerogatives exceedingly convenient and agreeable. It was so pleasant to the little sturdy imperious nature to find such a glorious opportunity of having its own will and way, and to be able to order everybody about, without any danger of being snubbed in return! he did it so gaily and prettily that none could take offence; with much laughter and ostentatious assiduity his high-born attendants obeyed his royal behests, and there was almost a danger when the feast began that this most popular little sovereign would be fairly killed with kindness.

Strange sight indeed it was to him, whose daily food had been black bread, vegetables, or a little common fish, to see the rich viands which covered the ducal table; much perplexed was he when the various dishes had been duly carved for him by his "carving-squire," and set before him by an obsequious though somewhat giggling little page, what to choose among so many dainties. Should it be white soup flavoured with cream of almonds? or fresh-baked lampreys? or jelly coloured with columbine flowers? or roasted heron? or stewed capon? or quinces in compôt? or roasted crane? or custard royal, with a leopard of gold sitting therein, and holding a fleur-de-lys?

He would have been sorely puzzled, had not the good-natured Louis, his devoted body-squire, guided his choice almost without seeming to do so; but as it was, he feasted royally; and between the courses-which did not consist of fish and meat and pudding separately, as in more modern times, but of countless dishes of each of these mingled together indiscriminately,—he had leisure to admire the strange entremets which were then brought in and placed on the table. Doubtless many of these were much after the fashion of those "sotylties" which the old chronicler Fabyan so minutely describes; as for instance this-" A sotyltic named a tigre, lokyng in a mirrour, and a man syttynge on horsebacke, clene armyd, holding in his armys a tigre whelpe, with this reason, 'Par force sanz reson ie ay pryse ceste beste,' and with his one hand makynge a countenance of throwynge of mirrours at the great tigre, the which held this reason, 'Gile le mirrour ma fête distour.'"

The last of these aforesaid "sotylties," which appeared at the Duke of Bourbon's table, was a more solemn one, in honour of the day, represent

ing the Magi, with a great gold star suspended over their heads, and little heaps of gold, frankincense, and myrrh in front of them, and this received great and grave admiration from all assembled, but before it appeared there was not much conversation, as the most part of the company were valiant trencher-men, and bent on doing justice to the good things on the Duke's hospitable board.

If there were not talk there was music. At the further end of the hall were a number of minstrels, who vied with one another in producing gladsome melodies befitting the occasion; and in the middle of the repast, a number of young children clad in rose-coloured silk made their appearance in a gallery above the minstrels, and sang in chorus a ballad about the kings of the East, ending with a quaintly turned compliment to the little play-monarch of the hour. Then making a profound reverence to all the company, and to his small majesty more especially, they vanished as suddenly as they had come.

To Jean it all seemed like fairy-land, only that he had heard fairies lived on honey-dew, which would not, he thought, have been half such agree-

able fare as the rich repast before him.



CHAPTER III.

"Willst du genau erfahren was sich ziemt, So frage nur bei edlen Frauen an!" GOETHE.

HEN the banquet was over, the little king was asked by some of the knights and nobles, who condescended to act as his attendants, whether it was his

good pleasure that they should attend him to the court-yard, there to witness a mystery which was to be performed by the Duke's own company of actors. on a temporary stage erected for the purpose. this he assented with a very good grace, for he thought to himself that it would doubtless be a brave show; and so in truth it was, though strange and irreverent would it appear in the eyes of a little boy of our own days. The subject represented was the Adoration of the Magi; and there were several scenes, in which the three wise men were shown first, as setting out on their journey, then as conversing with Herod, and finally, as kneeling in lowliest worship before the Infant SAVIOUR in His manger-cradle. They were all in splendid garb. and one of them was black as ebony-in accordance with tradition—and so fantastically arrayed, that at

his first appearance Jean very nearly laughed. He was fully interested for a while, but at length got tired of the long grave speeches which were uttered by the various holy personages, and of the prosings of Herod and the Scribes; being too young to appreciate the beautiful quaint pieces of wisdom and piety which were scattered here and there through the dialogue, and too heedless to grasp the true meaning of the performance.

He was not sorry, therefore, when it came to an end, and games of various kinds began, which lasted through the remainder of the afternoon, at least, till the serving of a second banquet, which was

hardly less sumptuous than the first.

Nothing had been said as yet of what was to become of the little king afterwards, or what school he was to attend; he was treated with homage and reverence—albeit of a playful kind—almost as if he had been a real sovereign: his wishes were consulted, his amusement studied, and not until sundown was he made to remember that the splendid pageant in which he was taking part was but a pageant after all. It was hard to him then to feel that the short day of triumph and splendour was over, and that he must put on his own shabby clothes, and turn into a poor child again. lips pouted, and the bright eyes looked woeful, as the young lords, who were acting as his valets, conducted him to the tiring-chamber, and took off from him his gorgeous mantle and necklace of curious workmanship; and when they began to unfasten his robe of crimson silk there was something very like a struggle.

"Quiet, then!" said one of his attendants, giving him a little shake; "you have had your day of pleasure, so do not be ungrateful enough to turn unruly now."

"They do not shake kings," said the child passionately; "and I am still a king while I have the

crown on!"

"Then that matter is soon settled," answered a page, laughing, and putting out his hand to snatch the crown off; but Lord Louis prevented him.

"Be not so hasty, Raymond," he said gently, "it would be ill done of us to send the child away in tears, when my noble father meant that this day should be all gladness to him.—Look you here, Jean, you shall come and see us again to-morrow, and shall dine at the Duke's own table, for such is his pleasure, and be sure he will feast you well. Then if your mother will come to fetch you, a purse of money shall be given her for your use, and you shall be sent where you may get good store of learning. So now be docile, and put on this strong new suit of clothes which my father has allowed me to give you in place of the old ones you doffed this morning. See! will not this keep the cold out?" And he held up smilingly a little coat of frieze, common enough in comparison with those garments of mimic royalty which Jean had just been wearing, but good of its kind, and the most suitable garb for a boy of his class.

Jean had ceased to struggle, but was pouting and mournful still; and when Louis took the crown off, and laid a gentle hand on the ermine collar of his tunic, great tears of mortification rose to his eyer

It had not been so with the last year's king, for he was a timid sickly child, who had been more frightened than pleased at having to act a royal part, and was glad enough to turn into his own humble self again; and some of the play-monarchs of preceding years had enjoyed the day like a game, had really played at being king, and thought it no more than natural that their pleasant play should end when bed-time came; so Jean's resistance was wholly unexpected. It was not, therefore, wonderful that the young noblemen, who had been seeking only amusement, were surprised and annoyed at his sullenness, and disposed to send him away as quickly as might be; though they might well have felt rebuked by the greater kindness and forbearance of the Duke's young son, who, even in his mirth, remembered that his father had designed this yearly fête as a work of charity—"done for the love and reverence of God," as the chronicler says—and that it would be a pity an action thus charitably intended should prove hurtful to its object.

"What is it grieves you?" he said, stooping down, and looking kindly in the little indignant face. "You should leave it to women to care for gauds, such as dress and the like; my father's valiant friend, the great Maréchal de Boucicaut, says it is unworthy of a Christian man to be curious

in his attire or in his fare."

"Ah, but I should like to be a real king," said the child proudly. "I do not want to be a poor boy, as I was before."

"Yes; but that is your own rightful station; and remember that our good LORD so glorious,

Who is reigning as a great King in Heaven, did yet for our sakes lay aside His glory, and come to earth as a poor child, clad in common clouts, and

lying in a manger."

"Louis speaks like a very clerk!" said his cousin, the page Raymond, who was being trained up in the Duke of Bourbon's household according to the custom of the time; but the companion whom he addressed answered in a low tone, "I cannot mock at his devotion, it is so like that of the holy saints, whose lives are read to us on fête days; and Maître Pierre de Chantelle says that such early wisdom is a mark of chiefest grace."

So little Jean thought, too, though he could not have put it in such words. He gazed with wondering reverence at the young noble, who spoke so like a priest, and listened patiently to his words, associating them with the waxen figure he had seen at Notre Dame that day. "But the Babe had a white robe sprinkled with stars," said he; "I marked it well in the church this morning; and a golden ring all round His head that looked well-nigh like a crown."

- "Yes, the good priests put that rich garb on His waxen semblance in token of reverence," said Louis; "but do not think our dear LORD Himself had any such bravery. His blessed mother was a poor woman; and her husband, S. Joseph, laboured as a common carpenter. Did you not know that?"
 - "I had heard it, methinks."
- "But now you will remember it? Ay, I am sure you will."
 - "Yes, truly I shall," said Jean; "and I shall

tell it to my father, for I think he must have forgotten it too."

This naïve remark, and its unconscious significance, made the young men laugh. They were glad that Jean had recovered his good-humour, and watched him with not unfriendly amusement as he now took off with his own hands the silken coat, and contentedly put on the garments of frieze.

"I thank you, my Lord," he said, looking up brightly at Louis when his toilette was completed, "and I thank everybody for my happy day."

"Ah, that is spoken like your own blithe little self," was the cordial answer. "Now, farewell for a while, but be sure you come again to-morrow at

ten."

"Give you good even, my Lord, and you, Lords all," said the little fellow, making a respectful salute to the whole company in the way his mother had

taught him.

"Good even, little one," they responded; and Louis called to the servitor who had been Jean's friend from the first, and who was now about to accompany him home, saying, "Take care of the child, Eustache, and see him safe to his mother, and tell her that he has acquitted himself right well."

This was welcome news to Marie, who had passed the day in a mixture of joy and fear—joy at her son's good fortune, and anxiety lest he should anger the kind Duke, and injure his own prospects by some piece of childish misbehaviour. She greeted him joyfully on his return, and willingly consented to his going to the Hôtel Bourbon again the next

day, promising herself to fetch him from thence in the afternoon, as Lord Louis had directed.

So when dinner was served the next morning in the great hall, little Jean, in the homely but neat dress which his patron had given him, was among the guests, and was allowed to take his place at the table of honour, not far from the Duke himself, though, in general, even visitors of the noblest birth were not permitted this privilege, as the Duke was not fond of being talked to at dinner, and usually had none near him, says his biographer, but the esquires who waited on him and carved for him. and Baudequin Mesclin, his good maître d'hôtel, who provided for all his needs. There were many guests present that day, for the Bourbon hospitality was well known; and the same biographer tells us. that during the King's attacks of illness, all those who visited the palace, and found that Charles was too ill to hold his Court, and that no preparation had been made for their entertainment, were accustomed to say, "Come, and let us dine at the hotel of the Duke of Bourbon, we shall be welcome there." a suggestion which seems to have been unhesitatingly acted on; "dont le duc," we are told, "estait moult joyeux." Nothing more kindly and unaffectedly cordial than his greetings to his guests could be imagined; and great was his care that they should be well placed and luxuriously served, though he himself ate and drank but in frugal measure, observing the rules of self-denial, which he and his hardy companion in arms, the gallant Boucicaut, had long ago set themselves.

Jean was not so bewildered by the various dishes

as he had been on the preceding day, and being now only the humblest guest present, instead of the little King of the Feast, was less noticed, and had more leisure for listening and looking about him. I am not sure that he quite sympathized with his host's taste for having the "gestes" of "the most renowned princes, formerly Kings of France," read aloud during dinner, nor that the work selected on this particular occasion. Christine de Pisan's "Livre des Faicts et des Bonnes Mœurs du grand Roi Charles V.," struck him as particularly interesting, though it was considered one of the literary masterpieces of the age, and was listened to by his friend Lord Louis with the brightest attention. there were some grand bits about feats of arms which caught his ear now and then, and he marvelled much to hear it said by one who sat near him that the writer was a lady, a fair and courtly dame, who had sometimes honoured that very table with her presence.

When dinner was over, and grace had been said by Maître Pierre de Chantelle, the Duke's chaplain, many of the guests bade a courteous farewell to their entertainer, and went away, while others remained, and gathered round the fire, discussing the news, the Duke meantime giving audience to any person who chose to come and speak with him, whether to prefer a petition or for any other cause. Even the poor people, who had been waiting in the court-yard to receive the broken fragments of the meal, were freely allowed access to him if they had aught for his hearing; and while these and others came and went, Jean was permitted to sit on a little

stool at the Duke's feet, and watch what passed. Some minds, even at eight years old, are quick to catch impressions from what they see; and not all his father's representations of the selfishness, avarice, and cruelty of the whole race of the nobility, had gone so far to convince Jean, as did now the sight of the courtesy, charity, and kindness of "Louis the Good" go towards impressing him with a conviction to the contrary.

Presently his own turn came to be addressed, for the crowd of applicants had at length dispersed; and turning to him, the Duke said mildly, "Now, my little one, we must think of your welfare, and my trusty maître d'hôtel shall make a quête for you among my knights and squires. See, here are forty livres to begin the collection, and the money shall be given to your good mother to maintain you at school, so that you may not need to work for your livelihood, but may get thoroughly instructed, and become a wise and learned man."

"I do not want to go to school," said Jean, twisting himself round so as to look up in his patron's face, having forgotten to rise when the Duke addressed him; "I should like to be allowed to play till I am old enough to go to the wars; there is no use in crabbed books."

"Hush, you are speaking foolishly now," said the Duke chidingly; "there is great use in books, as even I know, though my store of learning is but small compared with what you may acquire if you will. My good chaplain can tell you how much profit learning brings to those who are diligent in their studies." And he looked round for his be-

loved confessor, who was standing not far from him.

"You have much to learn indeed, my son," said the priest, drawing nearer, "since you have not even been taught to stand when your superiors speak to you,"—Jean reddened, and started up,—"but I suppose I should rather speak to you of the pleasantness of the learning which may be found in books. Now, while you are so little and childish, I dare say nothing seems to you so pleasant as play, but you must take it on trust that there are higher pleasures than that; and hereafter, when by diligence you have mastered the first difficulties of learning, you will know the keen delight of drinking in new stores of wisdom day by day."

"And God has given you a bright wit, methinks," said the Duke, "so if you will but use it, knowledge will come easier to you than to those by nature dullards. At any rate, learn you must, and so I counsel you to learn cheerfully," he ended,

with a smile.

Jean had so seldom heard a "must" that he did not feel its force as much as many children would have done; but instinct told him that it would be vain as well as wrong to bandy words with the Duke, and he remained rather sulkily silent.

"I had thoughts of getting you admitted into the 'Collége des Bons Enfans,' in the Rue S. Vic-

tor,"-continued Duke Louis.

"I think, sire, he is almost more fit for a 'Collége des Mauvais Enfans,' if there be such an one!" interposed the Count of Clermont, with a laughing glance at Jean's sullen face; but his father went

on without noticing the interruption, "However, as I hear you have a good mother, who has no other child, and can ill spare you, I think it will be better for you to attend the day-school held by the Brothers of S. Germain l'Auxerrois."

"Then I need not leave my mother? Oh, thanks, monseigneur!" cried the child, with glistening eyes,

all his sullenness vanishing.

"No, you can bide with her for the present, at any rate, and need but quit her side for a few

hours each day. Now are you content?"

"Ay, it is not so bad now," said the little fellow, nodding. As much as to say, "I can bear it, since I am not to be shut up all day long with the monks and the books, and away from my parents and my play."

"Very well; then take the hand of my good maître d'hôtel, and go round with him, and see what you can get," said the Duke, with a smile.

Jean obeyed, yielding his little fat hand confidingly to the hearty grasp of Baudequin Mesclin, who led him round the circle, holding out a silver cup to receive the gratuities of each in turn. The knights gave a franc apiece, or sometimes more, and the squires half a franc, so by the time the quête was ended a hundred francs had been collected; and when the forty livres given by the Duke had been added to the contents of the cup, and Baudequin began to count it over previous to depositing it in a stout leathern bag, Jean looked on in speechless wonder and delight, thinking to himself, "Now my mother and father shall have nice new clothes like mine, and I will get my mother to have roast ca-

pons for dinner always, like those I ate of yesterday."

"My sister Isabelle wishes to see the child, sire; may I take him to my mother's bower-room awhile?" said Louis, now coming forward and addressing his father.

"Yes, you may take him; but bring him with you into the chapel for the office of Nones. His mother will come for him after that," was the

reply.

So Jean was taken to the saloon, where the Duchess of Bourbon, her little daughter Isabelle, and the Countess of Clermont, sat at work with their bower-maidens. Two pages were in waiting at the door, and another—the Duke's nephew, before mentioned—was sitting on a cushion at the Duchess' feet, singing a ballad about a "preux chevalier," who had been fortunate enough to rescue a fair lady who had been fortunate enough to rescue a fair lady who had been taken captive by a giant. After the momentary interruption, caused by the entrance of Louis and his protégé, the song went on as before; and Jean found it so charming, that when it was ended he cried out eagerly, "Oh, sing something else!"

The ladies-in-waiting looked intensely scandalized; and Louis blushed as if he himself had been

guilty.

"Hush, little malapert, none sing here but at my lady-mother's request," said he. "Pardon him, gracious mother, for I am sure he meant no harm."

"These are ill times, in which even babes do forget the respect due to their superiors," said the uchess, sighing; "it was not so when I was

young; but indeed I have ever thought that the simple folk of our Dauphiny of Auvergne, among whom I lived then, were wiser in all good and mannerly lore than the sharper-witted people of

this turbulent city."

"Yet our Parisians can be the most courteous of all people when they will, dear mother," answered Louis respectfully; "and this child here is going to be a right well-ordered, grave, and learned man some day, for my noble father is going to send him to school, and he is to be trained up for the priesthood. I brought him here that Isabelle might see him."

"What a bright face he has!" said Isabelle, glad of an excuse to lay down the tapestry-work which she—being but twelve years old, and full of spirits—sometimes found rather wearisome. "Prythee, Cousin Raymond, fetch me my box of raspberry confection from yonder table. I dare say the little one is fond of sweets."

It was a kind of dried sweetmeat, composed of raspberry juice, honey, and some other ingredients, and allowed to harden till it could be taken up in the fingers, like our modern sugar-plums; Jean was nothing loth to partake of it, and was allowed to sit down on a mat by the fire to munch it at his leisure, while Isabelle asked her brother to play a game at chess with her.

"Nay, nay, Isabelle, do not be so idle," said the Duchess; "come back to your work.—And you, Louis, see if you can repeat to us those good verses of Eustache Deschamps, which we strove to teach

you a week ago."

Both the young people did as they were bid; and the graceful Louis drew himself up into an attitude of most respectful attention, as, standing before his mother, he repeated—

"Vous qui voulez l'ordre de Chevalier, Il vous convient mener nouvelle vie; Devotement en oraison veillier, Pechié fuir, orgueil et villainie: L'église devez deffendre, La veuve aussi l'orphelin entreprendre, Estre hardis, et le peuple garder: Prodoms loyaux sanz rien de l'autruy prendre, Ainsi se doit Chevalier gouverner."

"You are a right good pupil, Louis," said his sister-in-law, the Countess; "now Raymond here cannot even remember the two short couplets which I tried to teach him at the same time."

"I know it began 'Chevaliers en ce monde cy,' dear lady," said Raymond, with something very like a yawn, "and I know it was to the same purport as most of the other rhymes I have learnt since I came to my uncle's, which all go to prove that a good knight must be a saint and a warrior rolled into one."

"You will be neither the one nor the other if you do not improve," was the spirited reply. "I saw you laugh and shrug your shoulders when my gracious father-in-law was quoting yesterday those noble words, that 'the lands of kings and knights have been given to them in order that they may defend the people."

Her brilliant eyes were full of reproach; but Raymond answered lightly, "Ah, now you have brought back those couplets to my memory! Do not say I cannot remember them, for thus they run—

'Chevaliers en ce monde cy Ne peuvent vivre sans soucy; Ils doivent le peuple defendre Et leur sang pour le Foy espandre,'

only you know I like those lines about 'Anges de Paradis' much better, for my homage goes ever to the ladies."

"Ah, those were written for the tournament which was held at S. Denis, in the year 1389," said the Duchess.

"And you sat there smiling sweetly, gracious aunt, did you not? while the minstrel sang—

'Servants d'amour, regardez doucement Aux échaffauts Anges de Paradis; Lors jouterez fort et joyeusement, Et vous serez honorés et chéris.'

I forget the rest; but, oh! would that I had been one of the knights to whom that was addressed, and could have broken a lance in your honour."

"You were not born then, child," said the Duchess rather drily; but Isabelle cried gaily, "You shall break a lance for me some day, cousin, only I will not have you for my knight unless you are full holy and brave, as well as great in gallantry."

"I wonder if Eric the Pomeranian is all that?"

whispered saucy Raymond.

Isabelle blushed and bridled, for this Eric was her affianced husband, the future King of Denmark and

Norway; she had lately been betrothed to him, and the marriage was to be celebrated so soon as she should be of age sufficient.

"Do not whisper, it is not a courteous custom," said the Countess of Clermont gently, having caught the sound, though not the sense, of her young cousin's remark.

Jean meantime said nothing, but thought the He seemed to be engrossed in stroking and fondling a beautiful dog which lay on the mat near him, but in reality he was listening attentively, and learning a good deal without knowing it. He had been used to be unruly with his mother, because, as she was a woman and gentle, he saw no necessity for minding her; but here, in the Duke of Bourbon's household, he found women the chief teachers of right sentiments and courteous ways, and great lads of fourteen and fifteen content to be taught by them, and to obey them. He had thought, too, that knights and nobles lived only to enjoy themselves, to fight and feast; and now he found that the knights themselves were taught a very different view of their duty. "'To guard the people, to help the widows and orphans,'—I must tell my father that the fair young lady in the great grand head-dress teaches the pages that knights must do all that." said he to himself. "I like that ladyshe has a lovely face; but I think she they call the Duchess looks somewhat crabbed. I am sure those pages by the door must be afraid of her, for they never say anything. How young one of them is! not so very much bigger than I: and I remember now that he rode beside her litter vesterday, and that the master of the pages called out to him that he must keep close, for if he rode away, as he had done before, he should be whipped! They do not live here in the palaces at all as I thought; the boys cannot even do as they like as much as I can

myself."

These reflections were cut short by a summons to the chapel: and Jean was again surprised to find that all the household assembled to hear the sacred office, and that even the youngest of the damoiseaux was expected to be quiet and attentive. He would not have found it thus in all titled families, for in some the very spirit of misrule prevailed, and in others all religious duties were gone through impatiently as a piece of tiresome formalism, necessary merely for appearance' sake; but fortunately his one experience of life in a noble family happened to be a bright exception to the general fashion of those corrupt days, and a spirit of cheerful sincere piety pervaded the Bourbon household, which could not fail to have its effect even on a passing guest.

When he went afterwards with the Duke into the hall, he found his mother waiting at the door for him; and it may easily be imagined with what modest gratitude she thanked his noble host for the kindness shown to him, and with what joy she received the news that he was to be but a dayscholar at the school of S. Germain, and would not

therefore be separated from her entirely.

"Your son has been welcome, most welcome," said the Duke with ready kindness, "and I think he is one who will profit by what is done for him.

With whom shall I bestow the money that has been gathered for him? Have you the means of keeping

it safely, good woman?"

"No, I should fear lest it might be robbed from me, monseigneur; but there is a good priest—Father Ambrose by name—who has befriended me often, and I doubt not he will be gracious enough to keep it safe for my Jean in the treasury of his monastery, and give me out what is needed from time to time."

"That is a wise plan of yours, and no doubt Father Ambrose will prove a careful treasurer. You must be sure to take all that is needed for your son's maintenance, so that he may not have to work for his living, nor you to toil the harder on his account. And now, good day to you and to him; I trust he will be diligent, and grow up a learned man and a holy, so that he may be a comfort and an honour to you and your husband when you are getting into years."

"Shall not I ever see you again, nor Lord Louis, who has been so kind to me, monseigneur?" fal-

tered Jean, almost unwilling to go.

"Nay, I did not say so," began the Duke; and Louis broke in eagerly, "Oh, dear father, grant me this boon, that I may send for the child now and then? It would grieve me not to see his merry face sometimes."

"You shall not be grieved, my Louis," said the Duke with anxious tenderness; "your boon is granted, and doubtless on some of the fête days the child can be spared to come to you."

"Oh, thanks, thanks! then I shall see you again,

my Lord," said the little fellow delightedly; and Louis answered, "You have a warm heart, I perceive, and will not forget me, any more than I shall

forget you. Good day-good day."

Jean went away now quite happily, prattling to his mother, and to the servant who had been sent with them to carry the money. But two disappointments awaited him; his mother would not promise him roast capons for dinner, neither would she consent to buy clothes for herself and his father out of the money which had been given for his education and maintenance.



CHAPTER IV.

"Thou didst betray me to a lingering book,
And wrap me in a gown."

Gronge Herbert.

OU can fancy that the little scholar did not set off with such alacrity for his first day at school, as he had shown when starting for the Hôtel Bour-

bon; truth to say, he loitered sadly, and stopped to throw stones and make faces at the street "gamins," just like any little idle school-boy of modern days.

His mother had placed him under the care of a son of Simon the armourer—a lad of fourteen, commonly known as "Long Simon," from his height and slenderness, who had been early sent by his parents to the Latin school of S. Germain l'Auxerrois, as the best means of developing his natural taste for learning;—but it was like giving a very sprightly and discursive eel into the charge of a sober-minded tortoise. Jean frolicked, danced, and strayed about from side to side, all the while that Long Simon slowly but steadily pursued his way, his eyes for the most part bent upon his book, the "Book of Sentences" of Peter Lombard, then in

use throughout all the monastic schools, as well as in the Universities.

As they neared the school they fell in with other day-scholars, the "étudians du dehors," as they were called, in contradistinction to those who lived under cloistral discipline. Most of them were older than Jean, but some were not one whit less merry and mischievous than he.

"Oh! so Long Simon has a brat under his care!" cried one of these mockingly; "that is what makes him so late to-day. Do you know, most wise theologian and learned rhetorician, that the great clock

has all but struck the hour?"

"Then do not let us stop to prate," replied the wise Simon gravely; "give me your hand, Jean,

and let us hurry on."

"No, wait a bit," said the other boy; "and tell me, youngster, did you see the pope of fools t'other day? If so, I will wager Brother Martin's copy of Aristotle, which being not my own I may safely offer to hazard, that you will recognize his first cousin in church this morning."

"I did not see him," said Jean; "I was at a

mystery-play with the Duke of Bourbon."

"You at a mystery-play with the Duke of Bourbon! Tell that to the Flemings! Here, you boys, help me to give a good drubbing to this most mendacious of infants."

Jean's defiant attitude seemed rather to invite the onslaught, but Simon caught hold of his hand and dragged him away.

"Come, come, if it had not been for your tricks and your dawdling we should have been in school now, and have avoided this pack of loiterers," said he. "Why do you look back? Do you wish to stay to be drubbed by the scholars in order that you may get scolded by the masters for being behind time?"

No, Jean certainly did not wish that; he shrugged his shoulders at such a prospect, and tried to keep pace with Simon's long strides. In a few minutes they reached the Hotel, in a large room of which the good monks of S. Germain l'Auxerrois kept school. It was a sort of Gothic hall, partially detached from the mansion; and the owner, who was a patron of learning, voluntarily granted the monks the use of it for this philanthropic purpose.

The greater part of the scholars were already assembled, and were taking their places on low benches ranged around the desks of the masters, for the considerate Brothers of S. Germain had not thought it necessary to follow the stern decree imposed on the University of Paris at the close of the fourteenth century, which enjoined that the students should seat themselves "on the ground, as formerly, not on benches or other seats," and added, as a reason for its rigour, "in order to take away from the youths all occasion for vanity!" Perhaps they did not quite believe that taking away the benches would remove all cause for vanity; or perhaps they thought that, as young people could not be kept for ever sitting on the floor, it might be well to accustom them in time to the dangerous distinction of a seat; at any rate, there were the forms, and Jean was soon bidden to seat himself on one, placed close under the eye of a grave young monk, whom Simon, when introducing him, had addressed as "Father Antoine." It was the alphabet class, and one or two of the boys in it were about Jean's own age, though several of them were older. The other classes were pursuing more advanced studies, and in these were a good many poor scholars, who had come from different parts of France, begging their way to Paris, and subsisting, now that they were there, on the charity of the rich; sleeping sometimes on the hearth in the school, sometimes receiving shelter from good-natured citizens who were wont to place a spare room provided with beds of straw at the disposal of as many homeless student-lads as could crowd together in it.

Many of these were intent learners; and so diligently did they con their lessons, that Jean looked at them with mingled respect for their learning, and wonder at their tatters; but he was more interested in watching the masters, especially one named Father Martin, who seemed to be the head, and whose commanding figure, austere ascetic face, and stern voice, bespoke him a man whose authority would be rigidly exercised, and might not be lightly resisted. He spoke briefly to Jean, saying he had had a message from the Duke respecting him, entered his name on a parchment roll containing the list of scholars in attendance, and bade him be docile and obedient towards Brother Antoine.

The business of the day began, and for some time Jean was busied in learning to recognize the shapes of the letters which his instructor drew on the floor with a piece of charcoal; but presently the chime of a bell was heard, and the scholars were surmoned to attend the service of Tierce in the Church of S. Germain l'Auxerrois. Jean rose with the rest, hardly feeling the interruption welcome, for he had begun to wish to understand what Brother Antoine was teaching him, and thought that lessons being a novelty, were at any rate more interesting than the service which he had heard so often; but as he turned towards the door, he saw a face which attracted him and made him long for a nearer view Standing there, marshalling in order a certain number of the boys, was a young monk, with a fair bright face, ruddy in the cheeks, with a fresh healthful ruddiness which would have seemed more natural in a peasant than in the inhabitant of a city cloister; and with such innocent candid blue eves. as were alone sufficient to inspire trust. the boys whispered his name to Jean-"Father Colombe"—a name which harmonized well with his appearance, and added that it was his care to instruct the school in singing, and that he was now going to lead their chanting in the church. but a short walk thither; they had but to traverse the length of one street, and to turn the corner by the For l'Evêque, with its beautiful chapel, and there they were, close to the monastery and its new church, which stood then, as now, hard by the Louvre (the old Louvre of Philip Augustus, replaced in Francis the First's days by the present building,) and which though then consisting of but a nave and one aisle, and not adorned as now by the noble frescoed porches, nor crowned by the belfry from which, in after days, the fatal toosin of S. Bartholomew's Day was to sound, was still a grand impressive building, rich in Gothic tracery, and radiant with "beams from every window shed" through the

glowing garments of pictured saints.

Jean, however, took small heed of this, and did nothing at first but gaze by turns at Brother Colombe, whose voice was as fresh and beautiful as his face; and at a very grotesque old monk, who had a countenance like a withered apple, full of droll puckers, and a quaintly humorous expression which accorded ill with his conventual garb. He it was that the disrespectful student, whom Jean had met on his way to school, had likened to the "pope of fools" of the preceding week, and Jean nearly smiled as he watched him, but was recalled to graver thoughts by the stern hand of Brother Martin being laid on his shoulder, admonishing him to fold his hands and bend his head like the more reverent worshippers around him. He felt that the strict Father was displeased with him already, and bethought himself that he had promised his mother he would be good. "But oh!" sighed he, "what a great deal of trouble it takes to behave well!" and I dare say many little boys can sympathize with him, although their patience may never have been tried as his was by a Latin service, the general intention of which could alone be intelligible to him.

After service, the boys received a lesson in singing from Brother Colombe; and thanks to his gentle way of teaching, Jean found this very pleasant, though fain would he have tuned his voice to something blither than the ecclesiastical chants in which the good young monk instructed them.

When this was over, an hour was given for re-

creation; and those boys who were happy enough to have had some food to bring with them, now produced it and munched away with hearty appetite, sometimes good-naturedly sharing their provisions with their less fortunate companions. was a large wood-fire burning on an open hearth at each end of the school, and round these the scholars gathered, the elder lads pushing the younger aside and seeking to monopolize the warmth for them-Jean was trying to poke himself in among them to warm his cold hands, when one of the masters, who was sitting at the centre desk to keep order, observed him, and coming closer said, rather severely, "Shame on you big lads to keep the little ones from the fire! Here, let this child in among you, and give him a good place."

"That I will," said a youth of almost giant stature, rising as he spoke, and pushing Jean gently in front of him; "and do you also come near the fire, Father, for it must be very cold at your desk."

"Ah! it is good Father Colombe, to-day," said another of the lads, looking up and speaking in a tone of satisfaction. "Here, take my place, Father, and prythee tell us some anecdotes. You know"—in a coaxing voice—" such was always the custom of those saintly fathers Haimon and Loup, who in the hours of recreation used to fill the minds of the young monk Henry, and others, with a fine store of pleasant learning."

"Ah, you are quoting my words of a week ago," said Brother Colombe with a smile, sitting down as he spoke, though at the corner of the hearth so as not to shield the others from the blaze, and taking

Jean on his knee. "You have a good memory, my son, and I hope that my poor teachings may bear fruit in you, as did the wiser instructions of those holy men in the good monk Henry; who, when he became a man, was able to take the direction of the school in which as a boy he had been instructed, and wrote, moreover, a life of our blessed founder S. Germain, in six books of goodly verse."

"There was a fine scholar!" exclaimed Charles, the pupil addressed; and some of the other lads repeated admiringly, "Six books of verse!" but little Jean babbled forth, "I do not like verses much; I like my father's stories of the wars, and the tales my mother sometimes tells me of the fairy Melusina. Can you tell me a tale like that, good Father?"

"Nay, I do not know any idle stories of that sort," answered the monk, with gentle reproach; "but since this is your first day at school, and you are but little, I will think of some pleasant tale to tell you. You must learn to love your school, and grow up a wise and scholarly man."

"I do not want to learn, much," said Jean, with a slight protruding of his lower lip; "though, indeed, I should like to please my good mother, who wishes to see me a learned man. If I ever am one, I think she will buy a new kirtle for very glad-

ness."

The boys laughed, but Brother Colombe said mildly, "You do well to regard your mother's wishes, and I trust you will cherish her always, be you never so learned and great, nor despise her even should she keep to the old kirtle. I can tell you a story to that point; but first let me gather some more little ones about me, they need the warmth, and my story to-day is more for them than for their elders."

The good-natured giant who had first brought Jean near the fire, gathered in a host of little ones with his great arms, and pushed the bigger lads away; then himself went to the outer ranks, though not beyond ear-shot, for he too loved the kind master's tales.

"There was once," began the monk, his sweet eyes resting on the eager faces upturned to him; "there was once a little boy called Maurice, and he lived at Sulli with his parents, who were quite poor, poor people. He had a good mother, whom he loved—tiens! you all love your mothers, I hope?" -looking round for a responsive smile, which came; "and he was well content to toil for her and be her little servitor; but S. Catherine, the great patron of learning, put into his heart a huge desire for knowledge, and at Sulli there was no way to get this, so his mother sent him forth with her blessing. and he came very young to Paris, begging his bread. He had no friends in all the city; but the good saints watched over him and raised up teachers for him; so he studied and studied till at length he became very learned, and was made Doctor of Philosophy, and afterwards of Theology. One day when he had become quite celebrated, so that his fame reached far and wide, his poor old mother at Sulli heard of his good fortune, and thought to herself, 'Now I will go and see my good son.' So he took her stick, and put on her thick jacket of drugget, and set off to Paris. When she arrived there she met some ladies, and inquired of them about her son; so they told her of him, and thinking it would shame him to see his mother in such a mean garb, they took her to their own house and dressed her in fine clothes, and then conducted her to Maurice, to whom she said, 'I am your mother.' The master replied, 'I cannot believe it, for my good mother is poor, and wears nothing but drugget.' Thus he refused to recognize her; and the ladies, finding this, took her home again, and gave her back her stick and her coarse dress. She came once more to her son, who was in grand company among great nobles and learned doctors; and when he saw her come in, he took off his hood and ran and embraced her with all his heart, and said to her, 'I see now that you are really my mother.'

"Then this was told in the city, and every one honoured the great master who was not ashamed of his mother's poverty and her dress of drugget. And afterwards he became a bishop, the bishop of this very city of Paris; and built our beautiful Cathedral of Notre Dame; and here he died in the year of grace eleven hundred and ninety-six."

"Did his mother stay with him, do you think?"

asked little Jean earnestly.

"I do not know, but belike she did. Does the

tale please you, my son?"

"Very much, my Father; only I wish Maurice had gone to the wars, and been made a noble knight of by our Lord the King."

"Alas for your chronology, little one!" said the

giant, laughing. "How could that be? seeing that Father Colombe has just told us Maurice de Sulli died in 1196, whereas our gracious King did not come to the throne until 1380."

"Do not put little folks to the blush with your superior sense, Gilles," said Father Colombe, with a smile; "this child here thinks all that happened before his birth a long while ago, and makes no account of centuries. Still, my son Jean, I have a word to say in your ear, which is that you must learn not to reckon the holy office of a bishop below that of a knight; nor talk as if to fight a good fight for Christ's Church were less honourable than to take part in the wars of erring men."

"But the bishops do not wear beautiful armour like the knights," replied the child. "I know they do not, for my mother took me last May to see the great cardinals and bishops and princes come to Notre Dame. I looked hard at them, and a man standing by pointed out to us in particular the Lord Cardinal of Poictiers, and the Bishop of—oh, I cannot remember the name, but I mean the one who preached the sermon—they were both grandly dressed, but not like knights."

"They have no need of armour, silly child," said the monk, "seeing they are men of peace and not of war."

"Archbishop Turpin did fight like any hero in noble Charlemagne's time," put in Gilles, sotto voce.

"By that bishop whose name you forget, you mean, I suppose, Monseigneur Pierre d'Ailly, the Bishop of Cambrai," continued Brother Colombe;

"he preached that day in Notre Dame by order of the King, to set forth the blessings which would follow from the restitution of obedience to his Holiness, Pope Benedict."

"Yes, that was it," said Jean; "and I remember my mother bade me thank God, for that peace was coming back to the Church. Does peace always come that way, with a grand host of dukes

and bishops in brave attire?"

"Nay, like Christ's Kingdom, it oftentimes cometh not with observation," answered the monk dreamily; "or comes like the simple dove to Noah with one tender olive-spray. But this is beyond your understanding, my son; and it is enough for you to lift your little hands in prayer for the peace of the Church when your mother bids you, and to give God thanks when she tells you that He has sent the peace prayed for. Not till you are older can you comprehend the meaning of your petitions; but what says the holy Psalmist? 'Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise,' and so be sure God hears and marks the prayers of His christened babes, though they be stammered with feeble tongue."

Although the first part of this speech was almost unintelligible to Jean, he did not fidget under it as he usually did under anything serious, but leaned his little head down on his young master's breast, and peeped up softly and lovingly beneath the lashes of the meekly-drooped eyes.

"I love you, my Father," he said at its close, with a warm clasp of his sturdy little arms; "you are good and kind, like my mother. And oh! dear

Father," he added naïvely, "how blue your eyes are!"

A startled blush rose to the monk's cheek; at the age of nine he had entered the cloister, and probably from that time to this no remark on his personal appearance had ever been addressed to him. His long eyelashes drooped even lower than before, and he put the child from off his knee, very gently, but rather as if he wished to discourage anything like familiarity.

"I trust you will love all your masters, and your

fellow-scholars too," said he.

"No, that I shall not!" replied our little king boldly. "I am sure I shall never love Father Martin for one!"

A smile, astonished, yet not unsympathizing, went round the circle of boys; but Brother Colombe laid his hand on the child's lips, and said, reprovingly—

"Hush, hush, my son, I cannot let you speak naughty words, though you are so little. You are too free both of thought and tongue, and must learn to check yourself, and be more humble and silent."

The boys half expected that Jean would endeavour to justify himself, but he did not; the little heart swelled, the little lips quivered, and without saying a word he stole away to his own place in Brother Antoine's class, and stayed there till lessons began again, staring hard at the alphabet on the floor in a preoccupied way, and wondering what it was that had given him such a lump in his throat, and whether Brother Colombe, whom he

liked so very, very much, would learn to like him a little if he were to become good. He had no opportunity, however, of trying to regain his favour that day, for there was no singing-lesson in the afternoon, and the school dispersed before vespers.



CHAPTER V.

"The hobnailed shoes pay for all."

Italian Proverb.

INE doings are these, my masters! It is not enough that we are ground to the earth with all sorts of exactions continuing from year to year, but

now a fresh tax must be put upon us, and the hard earnings of poor men and women must go to fill the pockets of the Queen and the Duke of Orleans!"

It was the angry voice of Jacques le mécontent declaiming to a select circle of hearers—Simon the armourer and his wife, the doorkeeper of a church hard by, a crippled youth who lived on charity, and Jacques' own wife and son.

"I wonder the Duke of Burgundy has consented to the tax," said the doorkeeper meditatively; "he has hitherto withstood the oppressions of the Duke of Orleans, and has ever been counted as the people's friend. Why, he spends a fortune in dis-

people's friend. Why, he spends a fortune in distributing alms at the church-doors. I have seen him myself scores of times."

"Meanwhile he lets honest tradesfolk starve for

lack of the money he owes them," said the armourer drily. "Fifteen bits have I furnished for his horses, and five-and-forty spears for his retainers, not to mention other goods; and yet no stiver of his money has found its way to my pocket."

"Nevertheless, you do not seem very nigh starvation, good Master Simon," said Jean's sweet

mother, with her pretty smile.

"Saint Genevieve forbid!" exclaimed the stout fellow heartily; "I have a flourishing trade enough, but no thanks to my Lord of Burgundy for that. I have honester customers than him."

"Such as the Duke of Bourbon!" cried little

Jean eagerly.

"Yes, he is a good and honourable prince, and actually bethinks himself that tradesfolk must live—a notion which seldom occurs to other princes whom I wot of. Notwithstanding, it is whispered in the city that he is largely in debt to some of our rich burgesses, though they trust him willingly, knowing that sooner or later he will not fail to

repay them."

"They are fools then for their pains," hurst forth Jacques le mécontent. "These fine lords are ready enough to borrow, but for paying! My good woman here tried to persuade me that my Lord of Bourbon was of a different nature from the others—and in truth he treated our little Jean very generously—yet he has given his consent to this vile tax, it is said, and has withdrawn himself from the city, like the other dukes, that he may not have to face the just anger of the people."

"Do you think there will be a rising among our

citizens?" asked the doorkeeper in a low cautious voice; and before speaking further he looked about to ascertain that there were no eavesdroppers within hearing.

The conversation was taking place in the living room at the back of the armourer's stall. Jacques supported by his wife, had hobbled thither to learn his neighbour's opinion of the new tax, or rather perhaps to express his own; the doorkeeper had dropped in with a message, and had been beguiled into joining the political discussion; and the crippled youth was domesticated for the day by the armourer's hearth, thanks to the charitable permission of the armourer's wife. She, good soul, was of a cautious nature also, and at this juncture carefully closed the door which communicated with the open workstall, a precaution by no means unnecessary, considering the dangerous turn given to the conversation by the doorkeeper's question.

"For my part, I think it not unlikely," he continued, when she had returned to her seat; "for I am told that portents have been seen lately much resembling those which preceded the revolt of 1383. You remember how at that time some scholars found in the garden of their college a monstrous animal which roared horribly; and how, when they had killed it and dug it up, they perceived that it was something like a cat, but with terrible glaring eyes and strange disjointed limbs that seemed not to belong to one another? Well a beast much of this fashion has been seen in Paris quite lately, though I have not yet heard its exact description, and—"

"Oh, where is it? can I go and see it?" asked little Jean, plucking at the speaker's sleeve in his eagerness; but the doorkeeper shook him off, and went on in mysterious excited tones, "Moreover a globe of brilliant fire has been seen to flit from door to door of the city throughout these last eight days, when the weather, as ye all know, has been neither thundery nor windy, so that there has neither been lightning to cause the ball of fire, nor breeze to blow it from threshold to threshold: nay, rather there has been rain and snow, which might well have extinguished it, had it not been a supernatural substance."

"Tis passing strange!" exclaimed the two women simultaneously: and Simon's wife added. "Methinks I do remember to have heard of similar marvels twenty years ago, and truly evil enough followed then in their train; but I see not why these signs should be always taken to mean revolt, we have troubles in plenty already

without that."

"Nevertheless, that will surely come, and ere many days have passed too," said Jacques hotly; "I see not what is to hinder it, if our good citizens have still men's hearts within their breasts. taxes matter little to me now, for I earn nought, and so can have nought to pay; but still I can feel for others, for I remember the time when I was a worker like the rest, and found it hard to have to give up to the tax-collector a portion of each little sum which I received for my wares. I could bear that better, though, than seeing my wife's still smaller earnings taken from her, even the scarcoins which she gathered by selling vegetables in the streets!"

"I have heard," said the lame youth, bending forward from his place in the chimney-corner with more interest than he had yet shown; "I have heard, but I know not whether it be true, that it was the asking of the tax from a poor woman selling cress which aroused the slumbering anger of our citizens, and brought about the revolt of twenty years back."

"You have heard right," said Jacques; "my

wife was that woman."

This announcement caused some little commotion, and Marie suddenly found herself regarded as a heroine. Simon and his wife had indeed been long aware of the fact just stated, for they had known Jacques and Marie in former times, and had witnessed the poor woman's efforts to earn as a vendor of vegetables the livelihood which her husband—always unsettled and careless in his habits—had not contrived to gain in his capacity as lance-maker; but it was quite news to the doorkeeper and the cripple, and also to our little friend Jean.

"Why did you never tell me this, dear mother?" he asked clinging to her. "Had I been at your side then, I would have taken your part bravely, and would have roared at the wicked tax-gatherer more horribly than the terrible beast Master Pierre has been telling us of. Was my father standing by?"

"I was indeed," replied Jacques, "and sent the riserable wretch that oppressed her sprawling in

the dirt at one blow. Then began a general rising of the citizens against their tyrants. Alack that our triumph was so short!"

"Hush, do not speak of the past, dear husband," said Marie in a low voice of entreaty; "do not bring up the memory of those days of strife."

"Tut, tut, woman, what an arrant coward you are!" exclaimed Jacques impatiently. "Nothing but reproaches have I ever got from you for taking

your part against the oppressors."

Her sensitive mouth quivered, her soft eyes fell, she could not be grateful for having been made the occasion of strife, but yet she had never reproached him, and his hasty speech was therefore untrue as well as unkind.

"Let your good wife alone, friend," said Simon's honest spouse. "A pretty thing indeed to taunt with cowardice one who, although a woman, has as brave and faithful a spirit as any man of you all! She does well to ask you not to bring up the memory of bygone strife, for nothing is gained by contention; and let me tell you, poor as you are, you will have to pay your share of this new tax, since it is an impost on people's possessions, not on their earnings, so you had best make up your mind to pay it cheerfully. Those who refuse will meet with little mercy, you may depend."

"Nonsense, good dame, cease your click-clack," rejoined Jacques disdainfully; "how can I be made

to pay when I have nought to pay with?"

"Nevertheless, my old woman speaks truly," said Simon in his calm strong voice. "We ourselves heard the herald's proclamation at the Châte-

let; and after setting forth that the object of the tax was to pay soldiers to protect the realm against foreign invasion, he went on to proclaim that in each parish certain persons should be appointed to collect the impost from every one, man or woman, according to the value of their possessions; so even you, old friend, will have to pay somewhat, though doubtless it will not be much."

"Yes, and to the same purport was the proclamation at the Palace—ay, and even in the same words," said the doorkeeper fussily. "I have it from one who stood by, and heard what the herald said with his own ears. I can assure you it is so."

"Likely enough," responded Jacques drily, "since a herald's speech varies as little as a magpie's. Foreign invasion, indeed! foreign fiddlestick! Ah, if I had but my good right arm, the miscreant who comes to demand this tax from me should meet with a very different reception from that which he expects."

"I will throw the iron pot at him, father, and souse him with water from my mother's tub!" cried Jean, beginning to execute a war-dance in a spirit

of valiant indignation.

"Ah, you are your father's own son," said the delighted Jacques approvingly; but the other elders present looked grave and disapproving, and the armourer said curtly, "I see the good brothers of S. Germain have not yet beaten the impudence out of you."

"They dare not try," replied the jackanapes, still ancing; "I would threaten them with my Lord of

Bourbon's vengeance if they did. I have been now some months in their school, and scarce a blow have I got from them."

"Then their patience must be great indeed, if what my son tells me of your pranks be true."

"Ah," said Marie, looking up startled and distressed, "and you promised me you would be good,

mv Jean!"

"Let the child be!" interrupted her husband; "would you have him as mum and meek as the shaveling monks themselves? Prate away, little Jean, you have as good right to speak your mind as if you were really the king you made believe to be a while ago."

"Yet the Duke of Bourbon did say that even little kings should be modest," murmured Jean

reflectively, with naïve sincerity.

"Ay, 'tis no mark of good-breeding for a child to be bold and forward, but rather the contrary," chimed in the doorkeeper; and to this Simon and his wife gave audible assent, so altogether Jacques could find no support for his peculiar educational views in the little assembly; finding which, he hobbled away, discontentedly muttering, "Ah, 'tis the old proverb, 'Each frog is for teaching his neighbour's frogling to croak;' but let each look after his own, say I, and mine shall croak as loud as he pleases, whatever other folks may think."

This was pleasant hearing for Jean; and accordingly he rattled on with all sorts of pert nonsense during the remainder of that evening, as he sat on his little stool by his father's side, progressively emboldened by finding himself still unchidden

though with a misgiving at his heart that both the Duke of Bourbon and Father Colombe would have looked even graver than did his silent mother if this idle chatter could have reached their ears. Marie said nothing till just as the little fellow had got into bed, when—stooping to tuck in the coarse coverlet round him—she asked softly, "Do you know what my parish priest at Orronville ence said to me, when I was a little girl and lived there?"

"No, what was it?" he responded, lifting his eyes with the bright inquiring look of a sprightly robin.

"He said that those learned in the Scriptures think that our dear LORD suffered Himself to be smitten on the mouth in order to atone for all the vaiu and idle words which we unpunished have spoken with our mouths."

A red as bright as that of the robin's breast flushed up into the listening face. He drew the coverlet over him, and spake not one syllable; but the mother knew that he had caught her meaning, and trusted that this saying of the good priest's would sink as deep into his heart as it had into her own.

Poor thing! she had much ado to keep her usual cheerful patient equanimity during the days which followed; for her husband's irritation about the new tax showed itself in other ways beside injudicious encouragement of his little boy's foolish speeches, and she had not just then her wonted measure of physical strength to help her to bear up against this daily recurring trial. A dull heavy

pain in her head, and an unusual feeling of languor and weakness, had oppressed her for the last fortnight; and though she neither relaxed in her industry nor made any complaint, the sense that this weakness was increasing gave another cause for the anxiety with which she looked forward to what the

future might bring.

The event which she so dreaded on her husband's account, the enforcement of the new tax, came ere One day, when Jean was at school, a blackgowned man with an ink-horn at his girdle and a file of guards behind him, made his appearance at their humble door, and demanded entrance in the name of the King. Marie opened to him; and swiftly, with a practised eye, he appraised the scanty possessions of herself and her husband, making sharp inquiries to satisfy himself that there was no treasure concealed beneath this bare exterior, and then harshly requested the payment of a sum which, small though it in truth was, appeared to Jacques and Marie a very considerable demand. Yes, even Marie was inwardly indignant when she found that the tax-gatherer claimed more than the slender stock of coin in the worn leathern purse which hung at her girdle would furnish, for no other money had they, and to make up the sum required they must needs part with something out of their small stock of absolute necessaries. Yet far rather would she have made this sacrifice than have entered into useless and disloyal contention with the man who came armed with the King's authority; and wisely did she endeavour to soothe her husband into submission, while her motherly heart rejoiced that her unruly little son was safe out of the way of temptation to sauciness.

Wisely and tenderly as she spoke, she was unsuccessful: to keep the peace between Jacques le mécontent and the exacter of the unjust tax was beyond her power. Undeterred by the want of his "good right arm," Jacques was furious in his He snatched the purse away from opposition. her, defied the collector to his face, and speedily elicited a threat from that worthy that if he continued contumacious the soldiers should be called in, and he should be captured and taken to prison. In vain Marie besought the man of law to have patience, and her husband to remember prudenceboth were deaf to remonstrance; and in a few seconds more the scene ended by Jacques being seized by the guard and dragged away, his one arm strapped down to his side, and a scarf tied tight over his mouth to stifle his unavailing cries for help. Marie followed, beseeching with piteous eloquence that they would not harm her poor crippled husband, and promising to pay the sum required if they would but give her time to procure what was wanting.

They little heeded her, and the only sympathy she met with was from the women who were following other poor citizens, led away to prison for the same cause, though perhaps with less excuse, as few had made such desperate resistance as the fiery Jacques le mécontent. The gates of the Châtelet soon closed over them all, and the weeping wives and daughters were left to return to their desolate homes with no better comfort than these parting

words from one of the chief tax-collectors, "Get you to your friends, good women, and gather each of you a good round sum, for I warn you that none of these rebels shall be let forth from prison until a heavy fine has been paid for him. Those who are not thus ransomed shall be accounted guilty of lese-majesty, and punished accordingly."



CHAPTER VI.

"Is this like love, to stand
With no help in my hand,
When strong as death I fain would watch above thee?"
E. B. Browning.

HEN Jean came from school that afternoon, he did not find his father by the fireside as usual; and his mother was standing sorrowfully in front of the

oaken cupboard which contained their few household vessels, taking out one article after another, and weeping as she looked at them. He soon learned from her the sad story of his father's arrest and imprisonment, and quite stamped his little foot with rage as she described the rough treatment of the soldiery, and the harsh sentence with which she had been turned from the prison doors.

"How I wish I had been there! I would have kicked and cuffed those cruel men until they let my father go!" cried he; "they might have taken me prisoner instead if they had liked, but he at least should have gone free!"

"Hush, my little one, these are but vain boastings," said the sobbing mother; "well was it that you were not here, for your forward tongue might

have got us into worse trouble—if such could be! A heavy fine! alas, Jeannot, how shall we ever raise the money? I will sell our poor furniture, and these mugs and platters, but their price will be far from the sum we need."

"But, dear mother, do not cry so; there is all the money which the Duke gave me, and which Father Ambrose keeps in the Convent treasury, that will be enough, surely; may I run and ask him for it?"

For one moment this suggestion brought a gleam of comfort; then the poor woman let her hands fall despondingly at her side again, saying gravely, "No, no, dear child, that money is not mine to spend, nor yours either; it was given to pay the cost of your education, and we must not use it for any other purpose."

"Oh, that is so tiresome!" said the child, pouting: "what do I care to be educated? I would much rather have my father out of prison, than get all the learning in the world. Do, please, mother, ask Father Ambrose if we may not take the money!"

"It would be useless, he would only reprove me for having such a dishonest thought. I must not harbour it for a moment, nor must you, my little one. I am but thinking now whether I might be allowed to borrow it—I would work to pay it back—and yet, I dare not say that I shall have life spared me for the labour!" She sank down, and pressed her hand to her forehead, as if to stay the pain that well-nigh benumbed her; the malady with which she had battled so bravely was increasing upon her with rapid strides.

It was a sickly and disastrous season throughout France just then; the abundant fall of snow and rain had occasioned an overflow of the principal rivers of the kingdom; and this had given rise to an epidemic of a feverish character, which began by producing in those who caught it a violent headache which entirely deprived them of appetite, and ended by reducing the sufferers to a state of extreme and dangerous weakness. Many of those living in the low narrow streets near the banks of the Seine had fallen victims to the disease: and Marie's heart failed her, as she perceived how plainly the symptoms of it were making themselves apparent in her own case. Now, when she needed all her health and strength, all her natural energy and collectedness of mind, for her husband's sake: now, at this very moment, these seemed to fail her, and the languor of intense pain was deadening her every sense. Tears fell from under her closed eyelids and trickled through her fingers, as she sat there pressing her hands to her aching head. It was not for herself, or her own suffering, that she was weeping: but at the thought of what would become of her husband, if death seized her before she could accomplish his deliverance. She was quite spent and exhausted with her walk to and from the prison: and her face, at least as much as could be seen of it, looked so strangely wan, that Jean was terrified beyond measure, and plucked at her dress, crying, "Mother, dear mother, what ails you? Shall I run for the leech? or shall I fetch Father Ambrose?"

"Father Ambrose is out," she faltered. "I sought him before I came home, but they told me he had

gone to shrive a person dying of this sickness. Perhaps he will return presently, and then you shall fetch him: it may be I shall need shriving! Ah!"—

The words died away on her parched lips, and she signed to Jean to give her some water. He did so, and the cool draught revived her for the moment. "Did I frighten you, little heart?" she said tenderly; "that was ill done of me; I shall be better soon. If I could but think of some means for your poor father's release, I should care little for my own passing pains."

"Ah, but let me run for the leech!" he said,

rising.

"No, no! he would not give his medicines without payment, and I have nothing to offer him. The tax-collector carried off my last coins; and even were it not so, you know we need all for your father. Father Ambrose will give me something presently, he is skilful in physic; meantime, I will lie down and rest awhile! and then I shall be better able to think, and to cheer you, my Jeannot. You will find an oaten cake for your supper, on the hearth; eat it, and do not mind about me."

With trembling steps she crawled to the pallet, and laid herself down, Jean assisting her as well as he could. "Rest to-night, dear mother," he said, "and to-morrow we will go to the Duke of Bourbon, and beg of him the boon of my father's re-

lease."

"Alas! all the dukes have left the city."

"Ah, that is bad! but, perhaps, Lord Louis may have stayed behind; I will go to him to-morrow, and if you are not well enough to come

with me, I can go alone; I am not afraid! I am sure he has plenty of gold and silver, for I saw him give, oh! such large alms to the beggars in the porch of Notre Dame. Do not fret. I will tell him all our trouble, and I will say—"

He was running on with such words of entreaty as his childish brain could devise, but was stopped by his mother's starting up. "Let us go now, this moment!" she said. "You were ever my good son; and your bright wit has hit on a plan which may bring success. Let us start before it gets too late: in a little while this sickness may have palsied me."

She stretched out her hand to reach her cloak, but dizziness overpowered her; she staggered as if stricken with sudden blindness, and dropped on the couch again.

"What is to become of us now?" she gasped,

with a face like death.

"Do not die, mother, dear mother, pray do not die!" said the child, kneeling down by her; and lifting up his distressed eyes, he cried aloud, "Oh, come to our help, good Saints! We want you so much."

"Help, sweet SAVIOUR, though I am all unworthy!" faltered the fainting woman; and with

this last effort consciousness ebbed away.

The fire on the hearth had sunk till nought was left but a few red embers, and evening was coming on; so the room was full of shadows of darkness, as well as of a strange awful something, which felt to the terrified child like the shadow of death.

He still knelt by the bedside, repeating a prayer

which his mother had taught him; not with any real heed of its petitions, but as if it had been a charm to dispel that dread gloom and silence. When he came to the end he said it again, with an intonation somewhat indignant, as well as frightened; and at length sobbed out, "Here are we at our utmost need, and yet nothing is done for us! It grows darker and darker, and no white angel comes through the gloom. I would wait no longer, but go and fetch Father Ambrose; only that I fear if my mother were to open her eyes and miss me,

she might be scared."

So he continued to watch beside her, and the brave spirit kept its longing to do something and its flickering hope; though in its depths throbbed the great dread that those pale eyelids would never open, those livid lips never more unclose in speech. And still he looked for help from without; and fluttered and fevered himself with impatience, because the help came not, knowing neither by hearing nor experience those soothing words, "I waited patiently for the LORD, and He inclined unto me, and heard my calling." He might, indeed, have heard them in church in their Latin form, but the beautiful "Expectans expectavi" had conveyed no meaning to his ear. Alas for the times when the glorious Scripture words were to the multitude but as "dark sayings," because uttered in a tongue "not understanded of the people!" Alas for the poor and the unlettered even now, in countries where this system still prevails!

The good Providence, which Jean's faithless little heart distrusted, was round him all the time

and the help he had prayed for came; just as he was beginning to despair, a knock was heard at the door, and a voice bade him "open." He obeyed with alacrity; and there stood the dark figure of a monk, holding a torch of pine-wood which had been needed for his guidance through the unlighted streets. Strange and lurid was the glow which this cast on his cowled head and pale ascetic face; and to timid eyes he might almost have seemed the "spectre monk" of old wives' legends; but Jean looked up at him fearlessly, saying, "Ah! how glad I am to see you, Father! My mother has fallen ill, and they have taken my father to prison, and I do not know what to do."

"Poor child!" said the monk, advancing to the pallet, and throwing the glare of his torch athwart the livid face of the mother. "It is well indeed that I came, for here is great need of instant help."

Without more ado he proceeded to give it: gathering the red embers of the fire together in a pan, bringing them as near to Marie's feet as he could with safety; and then wetting her lips with wine from a flask which hung at his girdle, and proceeding to chafe her hands, uttering a prayer as he did so. "She has been taken with this prevailing sickness," he said when his prayer was ended; "and trouble of mind has, I fear, added to her malady; nevertheless, I trust she will yet do well; for the most skilled physicians agree that those who have led sober and frugal lives do, by Gon's pleasure, stand the best chance of recovery."

"She is too good to die," responded Jean, rub-

bing away with all his might at her left hand, while Father Ambrose chafed the right.

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"Not so; it is the good whom the Almighty takes from the evil to come!" said the priest reverently. "Still, He may have work for her to do, and in His mercy may spare her to you awhile; so slack not your efforts, but trust and pray."

Marie opened her eyes at last, with a faint cry; and Father Ambrose held the wine-flask to her lips, and succeeded in getting her to swallow a few drops. Then he tried feeding her with morsels of the oaten cake (which Jean had not touched) sopped in wine; and presently she revived enough to speak, but her words were indistinct and wandering, and showed that her mind was astray.

"We are safe in Picardy," she murmured; "there is no fighting in the streets here." Then again; "Have they dragged him from the altar? Oh, husband!" Then—"All prisoners! my poor crippled husband in prison!—the Holy Church in bondage! Did you say the schism was over? No, surely, for I would have gone pilgrimage to Rome, and they told me the King forbade it. Those fared ill that did go, they were robbed and taken captive by the way; it was that bad Count's doing—I cannot think of his name."

"Ah, she is thinking of the Count of Fondi-Honorat," said Father Ambrose to himself; "poor soul! it was well indeed that you were forbidden that vain pilgrimage—a prison—"

"Prison! Yes, all prisoners!" cried the feverstricken patient again. "No, but what was that holy word Father Ambrose once told me? Ah, my

poor head! stay—I have it now!" And with a force of which a few minutes before she had not seemed capable, she raised herself upright in the bed, and cried out fervently, "'Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all!"

With her wan face and gleaming eyes she looked like one inspired, and for a moment both the monk and the child were paralyzed with wonder and awe; then the good Father recovered his self-possession, and laid her gently down again, repeating soothingly, "'Our feet shall stand in thy gates, O Jerusalem!' Be still, my daughter, and think of that day of Jov."

She became calmer, and began to prattle softly of things that had happened at Orronville when she was a little girl; and finding this, the monk thought he might safely leave her, and went forth to fetch one of her gossips to watch by her through the night.

"Master Simon the armourer's wife is very kind to my mother," said Jean; and accordingly it was Simon's honest spouse whom Father Ambrose byand-by brought back with him. She was a cheerful stirring woman; and bustled about, setting all things in order, and presently putting Jean to bed, much against his will. He had grace enough, however, to give over resistance when he saw the contention disturbed his mother; and was soon asleep, in such soft dreamless slumber as brought thorough refreshment, and made him feel quite bright and cheery when he awoke the next morning. His mother was then sleeping, but her rest was thort, and she seemed oppressed by great weakness nd languor on waking; though her mind was 1

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clearer than it had been during the night. She thanked her friend sweetly for having watched beside her; and greeted Father Ambrose when he paid her an early visit, with gratitude that was quite touching in its grave humility—showing how little she felt herself deserving of his kindness. She could scarcely wait to answer his questions about her health, so anxious was she to consult him about what could be done for her husband; and great was her relief when he approved of Jean's notion of appealing to Lord Louis, and offered himself to accompany him to the Hôtel Bourbon.

"As the day wears on," said he, "the streets may perhaps be thronged as they were yester-day, for there is much disturbance among the people concerning this new tax; but if you hear any tumult do not be frightened, my daughter; I will take care of your little one, and with the blessing

of God will bring him safely back to you."

"Thanks, thanks," murmured Marie softly; "and you, my Jean, keep close to the good Father and be attentive to his bidding. You will not be

afraid to go with him, will you?"

"Not I," said the child stoutly, "I fear nothing. I would have tarried to watch the riot in the Rue de la Verrerie yesterday, only Long Simon pulled me on."

"He did well to have a care of you," said Marie, looking gratefully towards Simon's mother; "do not linger anywhere to-day, but think of your errand, and of your poor father in prison. Alas, that I should lie here helpless while my good man stands in such sore need of help!"

"It is the Almighty's will, my daughter," said the priest gravely; "put your trust in Him, and He will deliver you out of your troubles. His sure

protection is ever around His people."

She did not answer as he expected, nor take the comfort he had wished to give; a faint shudder passed over her, and like ice from her lips fell the sad strange words, "'If any man defile the Temple of God, him shall God destroy!"

"She bears the burden of a sin not her own, poor soul!" said the armourer's wife, with starting "Can you not give her some comfort, Father, while I trim up the child for his walk?"

She bustled Jean away into a neighbour's room, and there put him to great torture by sundry washings and combings, administered rather over-vigorously, though with the truly kind intention of keeping him out of the way of hearing what his mother did not wish him to know. Strange as that solemn text had sounded, coming in answer to the kind Father's admonition. Simon's wife was at no loss to guess its application. Twenty years before, she had heard it fall sternly from the lips of a monk, who with brave and righteous indignation, had ventured to rebuke a band of Maillotins, who, in their vengeful fury, had broken into the Church of S. Jacques, and murdered an unfortunate taxcollector who had taken sanctuary there. She remembered well the shuddering horror with which her friend, Marie, had recognized poor misguided Jacques among this sacrilegious band; and though his had not been the arm which had plucked the iserable man from his last refuge by the altartearing asunder his agonized grasp of the Blessed Virgin's statue, to which he was clinging for protection; yet the stain of having been an accessory to the deed rested upon him, as well as the sin of having defiled the House of God by entering it

with violence, and upon a sinful errand.

In mediæval times such violations of the right of sanctuary were regarded with great and universal horror; and probably, a dull stifled sense of guilt and remorse was at the bottom of a good deal of Jacques d'Orronville's morbid discontent. then, with what grief and shame the deed had burdened the purer soul of his faithful loving wife! Never had she breathed a word of this dark history to any living soul, and none among their friends and neighbours were aware that Jacques had taken any part in this act of sacrilege, except Simon and his wife; who had been in the crowd outside the church at the time, had seen Jacques among the rioters, and heard the terrible rebuke of the brave-hearted monk. There was no fear of their betraying the secret, for they had known poor Jacques in his better days, before the sad time of the revolt began, and had the true feeling of friends towards him; but, though his crime was thus safely hidden from the knowledge of men. Marie knew that it could not be concealed from the great omniscient Judge. It did not seem strange or hard to her that pinching poverty had been her own and her husband's lot ever since, and that their innocent babes had seemed to be born only to die: how could a blessing rest on the house of him who had so greatly sinned? Rather she was touched

surprised, and oh! how deeply and tremblingly grateful, when their latest-born child—the little Jean—lived and throve, and passed safely from babyhood to boyhood; it appeared to her a mercy greater than they could have dared to look formuch, much more than they deserved. She quite identified herself in thought with her husband, and had truly, as her friend said, borne through all these years the burden of a sin not her own; but since Jean's birth she had felt more hopeful and cheerful, less weighed down by the memory of the past; and not until now, when tried by illness and deep anxiety on her husband's behalf, had the full keenness of her first anguish returned upon her. Now, her kind confessor had much ado to comfort her: and Jean was left writhing with impatience under the hands of his careful tire-woman, until at length the monk's holy and soothing words had brought some measure of peace to the torn soul of his mother.

"It may be that this imprisonment is the completion of your husband's chastisement," ended Father Ambrose hopefully, "and that the work of penitence will now be more fully wrought in him than it has ever been hitherto. If this should be, you will have no cause to regret his present sufferings, my daughter."

"No, but would I could bear them for him!"

"You have borne much for him, and so content you; be sure he needs the chastening, and rest in the thought of Who hath sent it. Now I will go with your little son, trusting to be able to bring ou back good news; and do you lie quiet here.

Fret not yourself, but wait and trust, and above

all, pray."

She thanked him silently with her great limpid eyes, then folded her thin hands upon her breast, and lay there—the very image of patience and submission. If you pity little Jean—as well you may—for being the son of such a man as Jacques le mécontent, at least do not fail to remember that on the mother's side he had a goodly heritage of faith and sanctity! If ever, through the grace given to him, he should be able to say truly with a saint of old, "I am Thy servant;" with what reality and thankfulness might he also add, "and the son of Thine Handmaid!"



CHAPTER VII.

"Now

Came gracious power, to still upon her brow Those troubled waves of some dark underflow; And her great soul, subduing pain, Spoke in golden smiles again."

WOOLMER'S " My Lady."

EE what I have brought you! Or no; open your mouth, and shut your eyes, and see what I will give you!"

It was such a laughing, coaxing, happy voice, that it was almost irresistible; nevertheless Marie did resist it, or at least, she obeyed the first of her son's behests and not the second, raising herself with an eager start from her recumbent position, and opening her eyes wide, as she exclaimed, "You returned, my darling? Ah! how thankful I am to see you! And now, what news about your poor father?"

"Good news; fairly good, at least, for Lord Louis has written to the Duke to ask him to intercede for my father. He said he could not do more than that, but oh! dear mother, do not look so grave; it will all come right, Father Ambrose thinks 't will. He could not come in with me, for he was wanted at the monastery, but I can tell you all that passed as well as he, only first try and eat some of these dainties that Lord Louis has sent you. I told him you were sick, and he was so sorry."

Marie was far too ill and unhappy to care to eat; but she saw that the child's heart was set on it, so for very love's sake she stilled her anxious longing to hear more, and let her little son feed her with some sweet syrup which Louis had told him was

"right excellent in sickness."

It was quite a pretty picture; the delicate sweetfaced mother raising herself on one arm to be fed, a smile gathering in her eyes, and thrusting back the tears, as she accepted the ministrations of the loving little fellow, who knelt on the ground beside her couch, carefully filling a horn spoon from the flask which he held in his left hand, and then with his right raising it to her lips, watching her the while with his bright eager glance, as if hoping to see already some sensible effects from the "right excellent" remedy which he had brought her. His little brown face was all in a glow with exercise and excitement, the cheeks ruddy with health, the eyes sparkling and dancing, the pretty little red pouting mouth unclosed, showing its dimpled corners and Assuredly, if the syrup rows of small white teeth. did not act as a cordial, the sight and touch of this dear little face did, for the mother's tears were quite gone, and her smile shining out victoriously, when presently she said, "That will do, my Jeannot; you have done me good, and I thank you heartily; and now ait down, and tell me all you have done today."

Jean put away his treasures, and sat down close to her—so close that her wasted hand could smooth down the dark waves of his wind-ruffled hair as he went on with his narration.

"You must know, dear mother," he began, "that when we got to the Hôtel Bourbon, Lord Louis

was not there-"

"Ah!"

"But the people at the gate told us that he was only gone on a visit to his uncle the Duke of Berri at the Hôtel de Nesle; so we set off thither."

"No! did you? all that way, and across the

river too?"

"Yes; it was a long way, but I did not mind; first there was a little bit of the Rue S. Denis, and then we crossed the Pont au Change and got into the city, and there, in the Rue de la Barillerie, Father Ambrose met a man with a mule whom he knew, and he gave me a lift all along that street and across the Pont S. Michel to the left bank, and then we had only to walk along the quay till we came to the Tour de Nesle, and there we were!"

"It was a long journey for you, though, and for

the good Father, who walked all the time."

"Yes; I wish he had had a ride too; the muleman was so kind, he would not have let me walk even along the quay, only that the mule was tired; it was taking provisions for the Duke of Berri's household, and it had a great heavy sack slung at each side. It was such a good thing we met that man, for the servitors at the Hotel knew him, and they would never even have let us inside the gate but for him. They were so rough and rude, not a bit like the people at the Hôtel Bourbon; and they seemed to have no respect for Father Ambrose, though they must have seen he was a holy man—nasty cross fellows! I—"

"Ah; but tell me what happened when you got into the castle."

"Well, at the door of the great hall, who should we meet but Lord Raymond and another of the Duchess of Bourbon's pages, and they knew me, and he said that the Duchess and Lady Isabelle and Lord Louis were all staying there 'to be out of the way of the rascaille in the city and the ville;' so then I began to tell them that we were not rascaille, and that we of the right bank were a great deal more peaceable than those of the left, for you know what fights the students have, mother; but he called me a saucy varlet, and they mocked me, and Father Ambrose squeezed my hand in his so tight I could hardly help crying out with the pain."

"Poor child! but he did it to warn you. You are too forward with your tongue; I have told you

so often."

"Well, and then he spoke to the young lords himself, and they brought us into the hall; and there were many strange knights and squires, and there was such a dog, oh!"—and Jean was going off into a rapturous description of the charms of the Duke of Berri's great wolf-hound, when his mother stopped him with the inquiry, "But, dear child, was Lord Louis there?"

"Indeed no; Lord Louis is sick, and it was some time before we could get leave to see him; we stayed among the servants by the fire at the lower end of the hall, while Lord Raymond went and told him we were there. Then we learned that the Duke of Berri was not in the castle, but was away somewhere with the King and the Duke of Bourbon, and the servants told us that the Duke of Burgundy is dying; but he is away somewhere too. And none of the knights at the upper end took any notice of me; it was not a bit like being at the Hôtel Bourbon!"

"But why should you expect notice? You must not be set up as though you were a real king—that was but a play; and now you are only a poor little boy again, you must be modest, as becomes your station."

"But if I grow to be a learned man like Maurice de Sulli, people will honour me then, will they not?"

"I trust they will," said Marie, smiling, though she had not the faintest notion who Maurice de Sulli was; "for I have heard learning brings honour; but you should desire it for a better reason, and not give way to vanity."

When his mother began anything like reproof or exhortation, Jean found it remarkably convenient to go on with his story, and accordingly he continued: "Well, but Lord Louis was just as kind as ever; and when I at last got to see him, his eyes shone on me almost as yours do, dear mother, and he let me kiss his hand. And then I told him all our trouble, and begged him to help me, and he sent for his confessor and consulted with him, and presently he said that he could not do anything in this matter without his father's consent, but that the

Duke was not far off;—he would not tell me where;—and he would write a letter and send it to him at once. So then a scribe came, and Lord Louis said the words, and the scribe wrote—oh, so fast! I wish you had seen him! and Lord Louis said he would send to us soon to let us know the answer; and he hoped my father would be set free. And he made me eat some cakes, and he begged Father Ambrose to eat also; and he gave me this syrup and the other things from off a silver stand by his side; and he bade me greet you from him, and say he trusted you would like them, and that you must keep up your heart, for he knew his noble father would help you in this sore trouble."

"He is a blessed youth; may the saints reward

him!" said Marie earnestly.

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"Yes; and he said he hoped soon to come back to the Hôtel Bourbon, and then he would send for me to see him; and he said too, 'I do not wonder that you miss your poor father, and long to have him free again, for I am wearying for my own good father, although I know that he is in perfect freedom and safety.'"

"Poor young heart! Did he look sad and ill?"

"Yes; his eyes were heavy, and his cheek was almost as white and thin as yours; but still he laughed when he spoke, and made light of his illness. And he was not in bed; he was sitting in a chair by the fire, reading; and when I asked him why he did not bide in bed when he was sick, he said his father did not like him to be lazy, and that he should never be fit to be a knight if he could not bear up against a little pain. He had a parchment

scroll on his lap, all with names on it; and when I asked him what it was, he told me it was a list of places in Beauiolais, and that the Duke was going to give him that bit of the duchy as his ap-oh! what was the word?-appanage! so soon as he should be knighted: and then he talked about what he would do, and said perhaps some day he would found a monastery, such as his father is building at Vichy, and that there should be a school there, and I should be one of the teachers if I had learning enough. His eyes got all bright as he talked, and he looked so happy, and said so grandly, 'I will do this,' and 'I will do that;' but presently his confessor, who had been speaking with Father Ambrose, turned round and said, in oh! such a stern grave way, 'My son, if the Lord will, we shall live, and do this or that!' "

"Ah, true! And what did Lord Louis say?"

"He said nothing, but hung his head and reddened like a girl; I wondered to see him so easily abashed, but I think it must have been all out of his goodness, for he is very good, I am sure, mother."

"Yes, truly he is," replied Marie, speaking faintly, not from lack of interest, but because the effort of listening and answering had become too much for her head in its present weakened state. Well was it for her that at that moment the armourer's wife, who had been home for a while, returned, silenced Jean's talkativeness by giving him his supper, and held quiet rule in the little room for the remainder of the evening.

The next day, Jean very unwillingly went to

school as usual, and had some difficulty in excusing himself to his masters for having been absent the day before. However, Long Simon spoke for him, and Father Antoine pitied him and took his part; and the only bad result was, that Father Martin was angered by his careless nonchalant way of accounting for his absence, and thought that in future a little sterner discipline would be better for him than the gentle treatment he had received hitherto.

"If his father is seditious and rebellious to the laws, he can have but a bad example at home," reflected the monk; and this, which to some would have seemed a sort of excuse for the little boy's self-willed pertness, to him appeared only an additional reason for discouraging that fault by rigorous rebuke. So, between the chief master and the smallest scholar arose a sort of contest, which was renewed day by day, till Jean began almost to hate Father Martin, and to enjoy vexing him, while the Father himself was far from hating Jean, but was becoming more and more determined to conquer his unruly spirit.

Meantime, while matters were thus unprosperous at school, Jean's home troubles were lessening. His mother was better; and his father, after passing ten days in prison, was released by the Duke of Bourbon's intervention, and came forth, somewhat subdued outwardly, though in heart more embittered against the Government than ever. He might almost be pardoned the burning indignation—shared by better men—with which he heard, some time after, that the greater part of the sum which had been raised by the new tax, and which had been depo-

sited in one of the towers of the palace with the solemn understanding that none of the royal dukes were to touch it but by common consent, and for the interests of the kingdom, had been carried off at night by the Duke of Orleans and an armed band of followers, and applied by him to his own personal use. Scarcely a third of the collected sum remained at the disposal of Government; and well might the injured people groan for their own wrongs and those of their helpless king, and load with bitter execrations the name of the daring robber.

Nearly all the dukes were included in the popular disfavour; and when news came of the Duke of Burgundy's death at Halle, there was small grief among the people, and great wrath among his creditors, for he was so deeply in debt, that even the sale of all his personal effects did not produce an amount sufficient to admit of giving each their due. Then came the tidings that the Duke of Berri was languishing in his Castle of Bicêtre, near Paris, oppressed by the intelligence of his brother's death, and like to die himself, having been seized by the prevailing epidemic.

The clergy, at any rate, were grieved at this, for he had been to them always a generous friend; and when he now sent a splendid gold cross enriched with precious stones to the Cathedral of Notre Dame, imploring that special intercession might be offered up for him, the chapter determined to have a solemn religious procession on his behalf. The Parisian clergy, both regular and secular, responded readily to the summons; but the laity were backward, and had to be pressed into the ser-

vice by argument, entreaty, and-when these failed

—by force.

Jacques le mécontent, happening to be abroad that day, was seized and hustled into the procession, forced, will he, nill he, to hobble along, holding a lighted taper, and exhorted to offer a prayer for the Duke of Berri's recovery. Poor man! it would have been well if he could with sincerity have prayed for one whom he thought his enemy; but he was not likely to do from compulsion what he would not do out of free-will, and his mutterings had little of the spirit of devotion in them, though he suppressed any more open sign of rebellion, and hobbled on ungraciously and ungracefully to his journey's end, looking ludicrously uncomfortable and sour: but deserving some credit for even this unamiable submission, seeing how vast was the effort of submitting at all. The Brethren of S. Germain l'Auxerrois and their pupils formed part of the procession; and Jean thought it a brave show, and was quite content to walk steadily and join as best he could in the measured rhythmic chant, until suddenly he caught sight of poor Jacques being hustled along so manifestly against his inclination, and then the fiery little soul took flame, and he tried to run off to the rescue, and resented bitterly the restraint of Brother Martin's detaining arm. He twisted and wriggled, and tried hard to get away, and very nearly set Brother Martin in a blaze by the reckless manner in which he brandished his taper; but all this refractoriness availed nought, the monk kept firm hold of him, and went on chanting all the time with a stern unmoved face, as if no amount of little boys' naughtiness could disturb his cold equanimity. Somehow this calmness irritated Jean more than anything, and though he was of course obliged to yield, he did so with a very bad grace, and plodded along as sullenly as his father, pouting instead of singing, and brimful of red-hot republicanism, longing, to abolish all authority, and inaugurate a Utopian era in which everybody should be allowed to do exactly as they liked.

He was in much the same mind, though in a brighter and less sullen temper, when he went to school the next morning; and very defiantly did he receive Father Antoine's salutation: "Ah! little rebel! are you come to ask pardon for your behaviour of yesterday? Go to Father Martin's desk, he has something to say to you;" answering, without attempting to move, "I have come to school to

learn, not to beg pardons."

"Humility and submission must be your first lesson, then, to-day, my son," rejoined the master gravely; "go now at once, as I have bidden you."

There was kindness as well as firmness in the

tone; and Jean obeyed, so far as to march straight to Brother Martin's desk and stand there silently, looking up with his bright resolute face to hear what his preceptor might have to say to him. He was allowed to stand there for some time without the smallest notice being taken of him. Brother Martin seemed quite occupied in teaching his own class of elder boys; at last, however, when Jean moved impatiently and turned as if to run away again, he looked up, and said coldly, "Stay there, I will speak to you anon."

It was certainly rather a hard beginning to the lesson of submission, and would have seemed very terrible to a timid child; but to Jean it was only provoking. He could feel that the other boys were staring at him, and he stared back at them; but this was not an exhilarating proceeding, for they telegraphed signs of warning and compassion, or of mockery, according to their dispositions, and he had no mind to be either pitied or laughed at, and was ready to stamp his foot with vexation. Before Brother Martin had deigned to speak to him came the hour for prayers; and Brother Colombe went round as usual, collecting the choir-boys. fresh sweet voice and quick ear had caused him to be enrolled among them, so when his kind friend appeared he looked up joyfully, believing that the waiting part of his penance was over. however; as he pressed forward, Brother Colombe motioned him back, saying sadly, "Not to-day, my son;" and as the bewildered eyes asked for explanation, he added, "you would not chant yesterday when you were bidden, so I must not let you chant to-day, be you never so willing."

Jean's stubborn heart was melting beneath the grieved tenderness of his favourite master's tones; but it froze into pride again as Brother Martin said, "Stay where you are! I cannot have you come to church at all this morning; our services are for the good or the penitent, not for those who are self-

willed and perverse."

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He was locked into the school-room, and stayed there all alone, while the others went to church. feeling much more dismayed and affronted the ashamed or humbled, and by no means inclined to remain standing on the spot where he had been left, but rather disposed to wander about and see what amusement he could find for himself. This accordingly he did; and when Brother Martin and the rest returned, they found him mounted up on the senior master's high-backed chair, turning over with a careless hand the parchment leaves of a beautiful illuminated copy of S. Augustine's "De Civitate Dei," which Brother Martin—who could be very kind to the diligent and deserving—had brought with him into the school that morning to show to his own class as a reward for past industry!

He was immediately seized with no gentle grasp, and lifted down from the chair; nor was this all; a child who was not awed by being excluded from the church service must, the monk thought, be indeed one of rare audacity, and words of reproof or exhortation would be wasted on him, the more forcible argument of blows must be tried instead. short, our little king was flogged, and it must be owned he pretty well deserved it, though his was a spirit which could not be conquered by such means. As soon as he was released, he poured forth a torrent of passionate words, threats of coming to school no more, of appealing to the Duke of Bourbon, &c., &c.; but it was all as vain as it was wrong and foolish, for the only notice Brother Martin took of it was to carry off the enraged speaker and lock him up in a small dusky room adjoining the school, which did not contain one article of furniture, nor a single object of any kind which could be converted to a vehicle for amusement. And so the indulged

home-child, the little-Twelfth-day monarch, the privileged favourite of Louis of Beaujolais, was left in silence and solitude to recover from his punishment and repent him of his naughtiness as best he might! As yet repentance was far from him, for he was too angry to be able to judge sincerely of his own wrong-doing, and a long long way from the humility of spirit which would have "turned the rood into the rood," and made the discipline healing.



CHAPTER VIII.

"Ever alacke, my little foot-page, What causes thee to wail?

'Hath any one done to thee wrong, Any of thy fellowes here? Or is any of thy good friends dead, That thou shedst many a teare?

'Or if it be my head bookes-man, Aggrieved he shall bee: For no man here within my howse Shall doe wrong unto thee!'

O it is not your head bookes-man, Nor none of his degree; But, on to-morrow ere it be noone, All doomed to die are ye."

Percy's Reliques.

EAN Cabaret, 'en penitence' in the dark cell, was just as rebellious and unconquered an urchin as he had been before Brother Martin's cor-

rection. Although quite alone, he disdained to cry, and would not own his fault even to himself, but thought, or tried to think, that he had been punished very unjustly, and wished the Duke could know how his master had treated him. Who could have supposed that any one would presume to beat

the little king, whom the Duke of Bourbon had crowned, and whom so many grand lords and

knights had praised and made much of?

There was nothing to turn the current of his thoughts, for the room, as has been said, was destitute of all furniture, and its one small window was placed so high up in the wall, that even by standing on tip-toe Jean could not see out of it; and thus he was still brooding over his wrongs, though more than an hour had already been passed in this melancholy occupation, when his attention was suddenly arrested by the unusual sound of the trampling of horse's hoofs in the court-yard through which the school was approached. There was something cheering in the 'hurre, hurre, hop, hop, hop,' with which the steed dashed up to the school-room door; and as there instantly followed a shower of brisk knocks on this heavy oaken portal, made apparently with the thick end of a riding-whip, Jean concluded rightly that the rider had not dismounted. and that he either was, or fancied himself to be, a person of importance. The unglazed window of the cell admitted sounds very distinctly; and the place of Jean's captivity was at the front of the building, quite near to the school door, so he could plainly hear part of the parley which ensued when this was opened. His own name was the first word which met his ear, and this was followed, apparently, by some request, in which the expressions "our young lord begs," "the Hôtel Bourbon," and "if the Brethren will allow it," alone were audible.

The reply was spoken too low for Jean to hear, but the stranger's rejoinder, "Well, ask Broth

Martin, then, and be quick: I will await his answer." enabled him to guess what the tenor of it had The rider was evidently not of a very patient nature, yet not half so impatiently did he 'await the answer' as that pair of eager ears which the thick walls shut in. When it came, however, it was almost inaudible to Jean, and its purport would have remained unknown to him, had not the stranger obligingly echoed the concluding words; "He has been malapert and rebellious, you say. Well, 'tis but just he should lose his treat then, and vet I wish Brother Martin could have pardoned him, for Lord Louis' sake. Perhaps our Duke will send again for him ere long, for our young lord craves much to see him, and we must look to it that his cravings be quickly satisfied, since I fear he will not be much longer among us."

The esquire, for such he was, rode away when he had said this, without trying his powers of persuasion on Brother Martin or his messenger: but what a tempest of indignation, love, and sorrow, he left behind in the breast of little Jean!

That Lord Louis was very ill and wanted him, and that Brother Martin would not let him go—what sad provoking news was this! But he would not submit to such cruelty, not he! He would see his young lord in spite of Brother Martin: and he tossed his curly head, and dashed a few indignant tears from his brown eyes, as he came to this hasty resolve. Only it was much easier to make such a resolution than to act upon it, for when one is locked in, getting out is not a very feasible matter. On looking round, Jean discovered—what he had not

remarked before—that the cell had another door besides that which communicated with the schoolroom, and from its position he believed that it must open on the court-yard; but how to get it open was the question. He tugged at the handle without any result, and then he groped about and found a bolt, low down near the floor, which with some trouble he managed to undraw. His little fingers felt quite sore with the effort, but he did not care for that, and great was his joy when, on trying the handle again, he found that the door yielded a little, showing that it was not locked as he had feared, but only kept closed by another bolt which was high up, near the top. To reach this bolt was now the difficulty, for it was far above his height, but he was nothing daunted, and began a series of jumps, hoping by practice to jump high enough to be able to unfasten it. What funny little wild leaps those were, and how hot and tired the child became with his fruitless exertions! Yet the passionate heart within him would not let him give up, and after pausing a minute to rest and take breath, he made one last frantic effort, and actually succeeded in catching hold of the bolt. He clung to it desperately, and with his feet swinging in the air, applied his whole strength to draw it back. He succeeded, and with a violent jerk the door creaked backwards on its hinges, making a noise which turned even stout-hearted little Jean almost sick with fright. He expected to see Brother Martin instantly appear, and he dropped on his feet, quaking all over with alarm and fatigue, too much spent to run off at once, though the way of escape was now open.

No one came, however, and in a few minutes he recovered breath, and made a dash across the courtvard and out into the road. Once in the streets, he ran along with fearless joy, and never stopped until he reached the Hôtel Bourbon, which, fortunately for him, was at no great distance from the school. The warders at the gates of the ducal mansion hesitated before granting him admission, but when he told them his name, and repeated the message which had brought him to the Hotel, they allowed him to pass on. So did the waiting-men at the door of the great hall, and when he had advanced into it, he was met by one of Lord Louis' own attendant squires, who recognized him, and seemed glad that he had come, though observing with some surprise, "I thought the message returned was that you had been unruly, and were under chastisement: I am sure that was the word which André brought to our young lord. It grieved him much to think that he could not see you, and it is as well that the good Brothers have changed their mind, and sent you here after all."

Jean's honest face reddened; the good Brothers had been far from changing their mind, as he well knew, and but for the fear of being hindered from seeing Louis he would have candidly confessed to the good-natured squire how the case really stood. As it was, however, he was silent, and the young man ushered him up the stairs and along a gallery, at the end of which he paused, and drawing aside the tapestry hangings which concealed an arched doorway, leant his head forward as if listening to

some sound within the chamber.

I think the holy Father the Prior of S. Denis is with my lord," he whispered to Jean, as he drew back his head. "I know he was here a little while ago, and I hear something like the re-

peating of a prayer, so we must wait."

"But it is Lord Louis' own voice," returned the child, whose quicker ear had detected the tones he loved; and at this the squire put back the hangings further, and looking in, said, "Yes, you are right, it is Lord Louis himself that is speaking, and only Lady Isabelle is with him; so stay here a moment, and I will tell him you are come."

The dying youth lay on a bed of carved wood, canopied with ruby velvet, which threw a deep shade on his transparently white face: his thin hands were clasped together, and his great dark eyes, so calm and peaceful in their expression, seemed gazing beyond what was outward into the unseen world, while his pale lips slowly murmured Bernard of Morlaix's noble words—

"O mea, spes mea, tu Syon aurea, clarior auro, Agmine splendida, stans duce florida, perpete lauro; O bona patria, num tua gaudia teque videbo? O bona patria, num tua præmia plena tenebo?"

He raised his head at the entrance of his favourite esquire, and with a soft slow smile awoke from his inward communings, and listened to the announcement of Jean's arrival.

"Let him come in," he said; and Jean scarcely waited for the permission before rushing to the bedside, and covering with kisses the hand which his young patron extended to him.

"There, that will do, my little one. Get up and rest here in this cushioned chair by my side," said the young noble, smiling. "There is not much of my hand left, and you will kiss it all away if you do not quickly cease. Raise up your face, and let me see whether you look as bright and bold as ever."

The child obeyed, but his rosy lips were puckered up quaintly in the effort to repress a sob, and

his débonnaire glance was quenched in tears.

"Why, how now, my little friend?" said Louis kindly. "I fear your punishment of this morning weighs on your spirit. No doubt the good fathers are very strict in their discipline: but you must cheer up, and try to deserve better of them for the future."

"I do not care for them," sobbed the boy. "I never cried when Father Martin beat me."

"But perhaps you are grieving for your fault, though not for the punishment? and that is well. Yet be comforted now, and tell me how you like your school-life on the whole."

"I do not like it at all; the masters are not kind and gentle to me, like you, fair sir. Ah! why will you not stay with us? It is for you I am crying, for the rider who came with your message said we should not have you among us much longer."

"Did he say so?" faltered Louis, not without emotion; and Lady Isabelle came forward hastily

from her seat in the window, saying,

"Hush, hush! You must not speak so to my brother. How could you think of telling him that!"

"Never mind, dear sister, let him say what he will," said the young lord, recovering himself. "It

is quite true that my days are numbered, I read as much in my noble father's face just now, though he turned quickly, and went away in hopes to hide his agitation from me. But enough of this, I want to hear something of yourself, Jean. You were so full of your father's and mother's troubles when I last saw you, that you had not time to tell me much of yourself; and I should like to know how you are getting on, in learning and in other things. What do the monks teach you?"

"Father Antoine teaches me to read, and by-andby I am to learn Latin and arithmetic," said Jean, wiping his eyes and trying to answer distinctly. "I am one of the choir-boys already, and Father Colombe teaches me to sing, and to recite the Psalter. Father Martin does not teach me anything yet, he only scolds me and boxes my ears when he sees me staring about; but he has a class of bigger boys, and teaches them Aristotle and other hard things; so doubtless I shall have to learn from him when I am older."

"And you are in no great hurry for that time to arrive, I suppose?" said Louis, laughing. "Meanwhile, which of your present tasks do you like best?"

"The singing, I think; though I wish Father Colombe would teach us to carol some merry stave such as my father knows, instead of only chants and hymns. Such a one, my lord, as that which begins,

'Jacques Bonshommes. Cessez, cessez, gens d'armes et pietons, De piller et manger le bonhomme

Qui de longtemps Jacques Bonhomme Se nomme.'"

The little voice warbled it forth airily, as if it had been something very gay and charming; but the esquire, who was in waiting at the other end of the room, here advanced to the bedside, exclaiming, "Why, that is rank treason! Do you not know, my lord, that this was what the Jacquerie sang in the terrible year 1358? I wonder the child can be so insolent as to quote it in your presence."

"He means no harm," said Louis gently, "he thought it a merry air, and took no heed of the words, I suspect.—But look you here, Jean, you must not sing it any more; it was used once on a time to stir up strife and bloodshed, so it had best be forgotten, had it not? I do not wonder you love gay songs; I too like a merry ditty, such as the minstrels sing at feasts; and yet, methinks, there is no music in the world so beautiful as the holy chants of the monks."

Jean opened his eyes wide in wonder; and the young noble continued, "I have been told of a knight who, on first hearing the saintly hymns of the Brethren of S. Denis, was so transported with joy and emotion, that he fainted away; and when I first went to that abbey with my father and our gracious King—it was a long time ago, when I was quite a little child—I also felt ready to faint for year renture"

very rapture."

Jean smiled uncomprehendingly, for he was made of tougher mould than the young Sire de Beaujolais, and was not so open to fine impressions, but presently he said, "There is indeed something in the voice of Father Colombe which puts me in mind of what my good mother tells me of the songs of heaven; and he has a face like that of the carven angel over the pillar where she kneels in church. I have looked at that many a time while she has been saying Paters and Aves."

"Ah, your mother is a pious woman, then? I thought as much. And now tell me about Father Colombe: you said he was one of your masters, did

you not?"

"Yes: he teaches me singing, and I wish indeed that he taught me all my lessons, for he is so gentle, and so seldom displeased with me, and never chides like Father Martin."

"Ah, you have no love for chiding, I see; and I cannot blame you for that, for neither have I," said Louis, with a half roguish look of mingled amusement and sympathy, which served to show that, wise as were his words at times, he was still a

boy in feeling as well as age.

"I think it is the most tiresome thing that ever was," said Jean, shrugging his small shoulders: "yet I could bear it from some that I know, better than from Father Martin. Oh, how I do hate him! If I could do as I liked, I would have him hanged up by the ears, like those two Augustine friars who practised wicked arts on our Lord the King."

"Whom may God defend from all such for the future!" interposed Louis, crossing himself. "But indeed, my little Jean, this seems to me a very wicked wish of yours, and I must have you retract it speedily. Even if Father Martin were your cruel enemy, you should not desire for him so sad a fate,

and seeing that he is your teacher, and means you well, it is doubly wrong to harbour such a wish respecting him."

"Ah! so even you can chide, my lord, when occasion serves!" replied the unabashed child with naïve audacity, stealing a look of half-arch, halfsaucy reproach from under his long eyelashes at the

grave face of his reprover.

If Lady Isabelle or the esquire had heard these bold words, they would have been more angered than amused: but they had returned to their former positions, so this softly spoken piece of naughtiness only reached the ears of him to whom it was addressed, and the sweet-tempered Louis could not forbear a smile as he replied, "Father Colombe himself would have been forced to reprove you if he had heard what you said just now; and indeed, my Jeannot, if you answer Father Martin as you have answered me, I cannot wonder that he thinks you overbold, and punishes you accordingly."

Playfully as this speech was uttered, Jean felt the grave reproof implied in it, and his little pert face grew rosy with shame. Had he not all his life heard and been encouraged to imitate the licence of tongue which his father allowed himself, he could not have so failed in respect to one whom he loved and honoured as he did Lord Louis, and even as it was, he had grace enough to be sorry for his

rudeness.

"Please to forgive me, my lord," he stammered:
"I wish I had bitten my saucy tongue through rather than have spoken so to you! My mother says if I were to bite it when I feel inclined to speak

naughty words, it would not run away with me as it does."

Louis' silver laugh once more rang out. "Give it a good bite next time, then," he said merrily: and after a pause, during which a painful cough put a sudden stop to his brief gleam of mirth, he continued, "I know it is difficult to help saying what comes into one's head; I have often got into disgrace with my lady-mother for speaking without due thought; but, Jean, I want you to promise me that you will try to be good, and especially that you will not give Father Martin cause for anger any more. I should like to think that you were happy at school, and loved your masters. Will you not try hard to please them for the future?"

"I will, if I do not forget," said the child can-

didly.

"Are you given to forgetting?" asked Louis lightly: then with grave tenderness he added, "I think, little heart, you will not forget this, because it may be the last thing I shall ask of you before I die."

Jean's answer was a burst of bitter sobs, which made Lady Isabelle raise her head and say, "Would it not be better, dear brother, that you should send the child down stairs, and let Etienne comfort him, and give him some refreshment? These tears are too trying for you."

Jean lifted his face and looked at her as she swept across the room towards him, her childish figure erect with the dignity which she thought became a maiden of royal blood, and the destined bride of the future King of Denmark: to him her proposal,

made in all kindness, seemed most cruel, and he clung convulsively to his friend's couch, as though he thought she were about to drag him away from it.

"Be content, dear Isabelle," said Louis, "I will send him away shortly; but I expect my father to return each moment, and he may wish to send some message to the good Brothers of S. Germain.— You must not forget, Jean, to thank them on my behalf for having sent you to me. Is one of them waiting for you below, or did they let you come here alone P''

"I-they-they would not have let me come here at all if they had known," stammered Jean, hiding his face in the coverlet; "that cross Father Martin had locked me in, but I found a way to get out, and I ran off without asking anybody's leave;

I wanted so to see you, my lord.

Isabelle's pretty face wore a look of horror at this intelligence, and even the gentle Louis seemed much perturbed as he rejoined, "What! you came hither without leave? against Brother Martin's will even? How little did I guess that when I welcomed you so gladly!"

"Surely your masters will be very angry with you," said Isabelle, a touch of pity softening her

girlish stateliness.

"I do not care, lady; they may kill me if they like, now that I have had my way, and seen my dear kind Lord Louis," said Jean with kindling pride.

"But I care," said Louis sweetly; "and I am sorry indeed that you should have run into this fault on my account. I will do what I can to save you from punishment, but the wrong is done, and I feel as though in part guilty of the doing of it."

"You have no need to feel so," said Isabelle, kissing him, "for you are altogether blameless;" and Jean seconded the words by the involuntary cry,

"You are only too good, my lord! Ah, why am

I so naughty?"

It had come upon him all at once: the sense of his fault, and of the long train of rebellious thoughts which had led to the outbreak of the previous day, and to his sauciness under reproof that morning. Before Louis' humble goodness the little king's fierce pride had melted suddenly away, and if Brother Martin had approached with his scourge at that moment, he would have knelt meekly to receive its discipline.

But tenderer treatment awaited the little penitent. The kind voice of the young Sire de Beaujolais bade him be comforted, and even the stately Isabelle passed her hand caressingly over his bowed head saying, "Do not fret, perhaps the good Brothers, seeing how sorry you are, will deal gently with you."

"I will send them a petition to that effect," said Louis, "if my father approves. And look, here he comes! Rise up, Jean, and dry your eyes: I will

plead for you with him."

And in truth, in such a charitable light did Louis put his little friend's conduct as he told the tale of the day's adventures, that the good Duke, after bestowing a mild rebuke on the culprit, promised to send him back to the school under the care of the faithful old servitor Etienne, who should be the bearer of a message to Brother Martin, praying

him, as he loved the Lord Louis and the Duke himself, to deal indulgently with their wayward protege.

Many noblemen even less exalted in rank than the Duke of Bourbon, would have sent a far more imperious message, but he was one who always treated ecclesiastics with great courtesy and reverence, nor indeed even to the poorest layman was he ever uncourteous or overbearing.

He looked pale and careworn now, and the shadow of the great sorrow hanging over him was visible on his fine face. The black robes which he wore for the Duke of Burgundy were but the presage of that deeper mourning which he should soon have cause to assume.

"God speed you, my little one," he said kindly to Jean, as the child bade him a subdued and humble farewell: "let me hear a better report of you for the future. I have had much ado to save your father from trouble for the freedom of speech with which he has spoken concerning the new tax, and that licence of tongue which may be pardoned in one so pain-stricken and infirm as he, cannot be suffered in a child. You must learn to rule your spirit, and be submissive towards your teachers, remembering that what your friends desire for you is not only clerkly learning, but that you may be trained up in the fear of God, and in all holy obedience."

Jean heard this in respectful silence, and then turned to kiss the hand of the invalid, longing—oh, how earnestly!—for a permission to come and see him again, if but once, before he died: though inveed, with childish hopefulness, he trusted that

death might be much further from him than those around him seemed to think. Strangely touched was he to find tears in the young lord's eyes as his trembling farewell was spoken.

"I may never see you more, but remember me in your prayers, my Jeannot, and be good and faithful, valiantly keeping yourself pure from the evil of the world, as befits so brave a heart," said the dying youth. "God be with you ever, and the good

saints guide you into all holy ways!"

Holy ways! The rebellious spirit had much to learn ere it could walk in such paths securely; but the first steps on that pure but difficult road were taken that very day, and the "good saint" who under Providence had led the little feet thither was—though he knew it not—this young Louis of Bourbon, whose farewell words were made for ever sacred by the silence which followed them, the deep silence of death.



CHAPTER IX.

"Hoary heads were bowed and trembling,
Withered hands were clasped and wrung;
God had left the old and feeble,
He had ta'en away the young."
AYTOUN.

HE love of the forgiven! We all know what great things it can accomplish how purely, how fervently it can burn and glow! From great sinners. who—their penitence having been met by forgiveness-have become even greater saints, down to the little children, whose stammering "very sorry" has been answered by a tender assurance of pardon, and who try hard to be good all the day after, we see what fresh and beautiful energy can spring from the feeling that we have been treated more mercifully than we deserve; and that now—the past being condoned—we may take heart of grace for the future, and strive to show, by faithful obedience and eager service, that we, to whom much has been forgiven, can love much. Something of this little Jean was feeling when he awoke from his sleep the morning after his visit to the Hôtel Bourbon: and he new-sprung love in him gushed forth, not

only heavenwards, but also towards his former enemy, stern Brother Martin. For when, late in the afternoon, wearied with fatigue and grief and shame, he had bent down in the great school-room -from which the other boys had just dispersedto confess himself in fault, and own that he deserved nought but penance, no stern sentence, no wrathful blow had come in answer, but there had fallen gently and gravely from the monk's lips healing words of pardon and of kindness. Whether the Duke's message, faithfully delivered by his trusty servitor, had had the effect of tempering Brother Martin's rigorous view of Jean's delinquencies, or whether, seeing that the child had at last learned to be really humble and penitent for his faults, he had thought that mercy might now be safely shown him, Jean could not tell, and did not care to inquire. He only knew that all his bad behaviour at the procession, all his rebellious words when under chastisement, and even that last most daring piece of naughtiness, the escape from his solitary confinement, had been fully pardoned; that Brother Martin had forgiven him, and had spoken to him with such real kindness as even Brother Colombe could hardly have surpassed.

It had been sad to come home and find his father storming at the notion of "the dastardly old monks having dared to lay a finger on him,"—while his mother, alarmed at Long Simon's report of his rebellion and subsequent flight, was just donning cloak and hood, and preparing to set forth in search of him—and vainly had the child endeavoured to

appease Jacques' unreasonable rage.

When, as he sat munching his supper on the hearth, he had lifted his heavy eyes, and said in answer to some philippic of his father's, "Ah, but I did behave very badly; and if you see me fret now, 'tis not for the punishment, but because I fear Lord Louis is dying, and I am so sorry to have vexed him with my naughtiness;" the old man had raised his hand in utter astonishment, crying, "So that is what they have made of you! a poor-spirited monkling, who will take a cudgelling as a hound does, and thank him that gave it! Out upon you! you're no true lad of mine."

And Marie had drawn the wearied and perplexed child away to bed, whispering as she kissed him, "Your father has been ill at ease all day, and in his love for you was vexed to hear of your being so sharply punished; but do not take his words to heart: you do well to be sorry for your fault, and I

am heartily pleased with you."

And, alas! when Jean woke in the morning, with that new spring of love making his heart warm, he found his father still in an angry and sullen mood, still uttering invectives against the monks, and determinedly raking up all the anecdotes Jean had ever told him of the sharp discipline which held sway in the school of S. Germain l'Auxerrois. The child was too much used, however, to his father's railings to take much notice of them now, and went forth to school with a calm and almost happy face, though wishing that he might rather have been allowed to bend his steps to the Hôtel Bourbon, and see how it fared with his good friend there.

It fared well, though not in the way that little Jean desired, for the young Louis lay dying in perfect faith and peace; and the heart of the elder Louis was bowed in humble resignation, so that he was ready to own with the Shunammite of old, that it "was well" with his child, though death was fast setting its seal on the fair brow which he had hoped to see encircled by the helmet of a knight. He and the mother had trained the boy in courteous ways, in devout usages, in noble charitable thoughts and deeds, hoping to see him shine forth like the preux chevaliers of olden time, a faithful man in a faithless age, a perfect type of knighthood in a day when unknightly deeds and unknightly maxims were becoming fatally prevalent. Well, this training had not been altogether lost; they had meant to make a knight of him, and God's grace had overpassed their efforts, and had made of him a saint. white robe, and the laver, and the vigil of a virginknight, were not for him; but his was the reality which these things signified—the purity, the watching for his LORD, the white raiment of the redeemed.

Three days after Jean's visit to the Hôtel Bourbon, Brother Martin stopped him when school was over, and bade him wait for a minute after the other

boys had gone.

"I have something to tell you," he said gravely, when they were left together in quiet; "your good friend and patron, the young Lord Louis, has gone to his rest. Word has been brought to me that he died at ten o'clock to-day, in great peace both of body and soul."

Jean's eyes dilated for a moment in surprise and awe, then quivered into tears, almost the first that the monk had ever seen him shed.

For a few moments only the sound of this weeping could be heard; then Brother Martin, laying his hand on the child's head, said, "Enough, it is not fit that the Christian dead be weakly mourned; rather should we give thanks, my son, that your friend has been taken from this evil world, and offer up our prayers for the repose of his soul."

"Ah, but I must cry," said the child; "my heart is so big, and there is a lump here in my throat that chokes me."

"That is mere bodily weakness," replied the monk unbendingly; "conquer it, and be firm. They tell me the good Duke does not weep, though his loss is far sorer than yours."

"And do you never cry, Father?"

"We will not speak of my unworthy self; rather let me remind you, my son, that, as you are in training for the priesthood, you cannot too soon learn the lesson of self-discipline."

"But I do not want to be a priest," said the child passionately, "I want to be a knight, as Lord Louis was to have been, and to go to the wars."

"Now you are talking idly, for that cannot be; the knights are always of high degree, and you are humbly born. Yet content you, for a holy bishop has declared that the sacred orders may be compared to the orders of chivalry, and that the priests are God's best knights. Trust me, you will find rave work to do for Him as a priest in these evil

times, if you have but pure hands and a wise heart wherewith to do it."

"What brave work?" asked the boy, with a pause in the sobs which were well-nigh mastering ħim.

"Brave work of proclaiming the Gospel to unbelieving ears, of living pure among the defiled, of taking the part of the poor and the despised and prisoners against the rich and powerful and successfully wicked, of testifying to the truth manfully when men are unwilling to hear it; yes, and brave work too, of going forth into distant lands to lift the Cross among the paynims, and of shriving the dying upon battle-fields, where the arrows fly thick around you."

"Yes, yes, let me do that!" said the child, stretching forth his arms yearningly, uplifted by the monk's enthusiastic words, which no conventional coldness of tone could rob of their inward fire. "I will be a priest now, Father, I will indeed! How soon can I be one?"

"Not till long years of training have both prepared you for the work, and tested your willingness for it; but if you have a brave heart you will not fail, but will gather patience, and persevere to the end."

Long years! The words fell with a weight upon the child's eager spirit, but the beautiful brave eyes

kept their shining look of resolve.

"And now hie you home," continued Brother Martin, "and remember what I tell you. If you have a true love to Lord Louis you will show it not by weeping like a girl, but by striving to grow up the holy man that he wished to see you. Sore days are these for France, and I fear that sorer are yet in store, for evil men and seducers are waxing worse and worse; but it is in times of trial that saints are made and perfected: and you too may be a saint, by the help of God's grace, if you will but yield to His guidance, and fight against your own evil nature."

"And I may go into the battle, you said, and shrive the dying? And when the arrows come thick, thick, I shall not mind them. Ah! but will my mother like that?"

"When you are a priest you will have but to regard your duty, and the commands of your superiors in the Church; no mother's weak love will

then have power to hold you back."

Jean looked puzzled and dissatisfied; and indeed, the monk was now unconsciously teaching but an evil lesson. Of the holiness of family ties, he, in common with most of his class, accounted little; and he had no opportunity of knowing what manner of woman Jean's mother was, and how little she was likely to wish to hold him back from duty, so he spoke ignorantly and harshly, and in his ignorance branded as "weak" the love which was as strong as it was pure and tender.

Jean hastened on his return home to pour into Marie's ear a description of the "brave work" which Brother Martin had told him he might some day do for the Church, mingled with a full expression of the sorrow he felt for the death of Lord Louis. He sat in her lap while he talked, and found it soothing to rest his cheek against her

shoulder, just as he had been used to do when younger; but he tried hard to repress tears, and speak in a manly tone; and when he came to tell of the battle-field, where the arrows might be flying thick around him, he started to his feet, exclaiming, "I told Brother Martin that I would not mind them, and I shall not, even though they pierce my heart like they did that of the saint in the picture!"

"S. Sebastian, you mean," said Marie softly, her eyes resting wistfully on her little son's excited face. "May that holy martyr obtain for you a spirit like his own, and be your shield in the day of

battle."

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"Tut, tut, tut, there are no martyrs now-a-days," interposed Jacques; "but I am glad to see, boy, that they have not made quite a craven of you yet."

"They never will; and what's more, they do not wish it," said the child, flashing round on him; "I am sure Father Martin, though he is a priest and a monk, is no more of a coward than you are, father."

"No, he does not want for courage," muttered Jacques bitterly to himself, as though from some personal knowledge; then he added loudly and angrily, "What a clack you do keep up about 'Father Martin!' Cannot you hold your tongue about him? I am sure you have no reason to be so fond of him!"

"You mean because he beat me; but Lord Louis did not seem to think that cruel, and all the boys say it is nothing. Long Simon says boys must

expect to be knocked about."

"Nevertheless, all boys do not take it so tamely. Did you never hear what happened in the monastery at Fulda some years since? The scholars had been misbehaving, so the masters sent one of the lads to fetch the rods, which were kept in a chamber above the school, but instead of bringing them he set them on fire, and soon the whole place was in a blaze. I think, if I remember right, that the whole monastery was burnt to the ground—that was a rare piece of work, was it not?" And Jacques chuckled.

Jean laughed also, exclaiming, "Then all the boys must have had holidays—at least, if they were not burnt too!"

But Marie looked distressed. It was a daily grief to her to perceive how bad was the influence which Jacques exercised over his son's mind; and she was perplexed by the bitterness with which he spoke of Brother Martin, scarcely thinking it possible that it could arise merely from his having heard of the monk's severity to little Jean, a severity so common in those days, that hardly any parent thought of objecting to it, nor any child, less spoilt than our little king, of esteeming it as a peculiar hardship.

Spite of his father's efforts to the contrary, Jean retained his respect for Brother Martin's opinion, and thought again of his words about not weeping, when, a day or two after, he was summoned to the Hôtel Bourbon, and admitted to the room where the corpse of the young lord lay in state, hundreds of tapers shedding around it their artificial radiance, while the golden beams of day were carefully ex-

cluded. For, though many of the attendants shed tears, and whispered in broken voices one to another, the Duke wore a calm face, which seemed lifted beyond emotion by the high and tranquil resignation which possessed his noble soul; and, remembering the monk's precepts, Jean struggled hard in his childish way to imitate this example of lofty composure.

It chanced that while he was at the Hotel, the Duke of Berri—who had partially recovered his health—arrived to pay a visit of condolence; and Duke Louis came forth from his private apartments to meet and thank his princely guest, so thus little Jean had an opportunity of seeing him, and, standing unnoticed in a corner, was able to mark the clear unfaltering accents of that majestic

voice.

"I thank you, my lord," said the mourner courteously, "for your kindness in setting aside etiquette, and coming to visit a lesser lord; and still more deeply I thank you for the affection you have ever shown to my fair son Louis, who is now gone home to God. Truly this life is but a hostelry, and the true rest of the soul while here is only in the knowledge of God and the hope of a future life; for you know, my lord, that nature, mother of all things, has given us men a shelter where we may dwell together for a time, but has not given us as yet an abiding dwelling where we may for ever Wherefore, my lord, I may not live and rest. murmur though God has taken my son-albeit, had he lived, he would, I think, have been the noblest of all his lineage—for it is His pleasure;

He lent him to me, He has now recalled him to Himself. His holy Name be blessed!"1

The Duke of Berri and many of those who stood by burst forth into weeping as they heard these calm words, but still Louis of Bourbon wept not; and the little plebeian in the corner pressed back the tears from his eyes, and gulped down the involuntary choking in his throat with the manful determination, "I will not cry, I will not! for the good Duke looks like a holy saint, and sheds not a tear; and Father Martin did bid me master myself if I too would be a saint. Only, Lord Louis, my good lord, look down on me from heaven! for hard is it to think that I may be ever so good and yet you will never know!"

Being so silent, and keeping so modestly in the background, Jean was completely overlooked, and was still in the mansion when the funeral train set forth to bear the young noble to his grave. The bier with its precious burden passed close by him, and the child's whole heart was in the farewell look which he cast upon the richly-clad form, with arms crossed meekly on its breast, and face white and still as sculptured marble, which was all that remained on earth of the much-loved Louis of Beau-iolais.

Not among the funeral procession, but gazing down into the court from his private gallery, was the grief-stricken father; and as he too looked his last on that pure face, illumined from without by the light of the countless tapers which were carried

¹ These words are taken almost verbatim from a Memoir of Duke Louis.

beside the bier, but lacking the nobler light of the soul within, his iron composure at length forsook him, and he melted into tears. He hurried away at once into his chapel, and sent for his confessor to strengthen him with words of prayer; but ere he vanished Jean caught the sound of the heart-broken sob, which told of a mighty grief let forth at last, and thought to himself, "So even Duke Louis weeps! What would Father Martin say to that?" And then putting up his hand to his own eyes, he drew it away moist with sympathetic tears, which he endeavoured to ignore, fearing that by yielding to them he would be acting an unworthy part.

Poor child! he might have let them flow, for a far holier Teacher than the ascetic monk stood once by a beloved grave and "wept." Golden Gospelwords! which even young children know by heart now-a-days, but which our little Christian of the

fifteenth century as yet had never heard.



CHAPTER X.

"I cannot bar the coming ill;
I can but fling my prayers above
To that Inexorable Love,
Which hears and works Its perfect will.

"To It I trust thee! Let me stand
Beside thee through the painful years,
And give some comfort with my tears,
Though but the pressure of a hand."

Queen Isabel, and other Poems, by M. S.

IRE! Fire!"

The dread cry rang through the silence of the night, and startled all the sleepers in the neighbourhood of the Rue S. Denis; among them our friends

Jacques and Marie, and their little son Jean.

"What does that cry mean?" asked the child, lifting a bewildered face all rosy with sleep from under his coarse counterpane; and then rubbing his eyes, he sat up in bed listening, and presently answered his own question with the remark, "Ah, it is but another fire in the town somewhere. I wish these fires would come oftener by day instead of by night, for it is good fun to see them."

"And you might well rejoice to see this one, child," growled Jacques, who with a curiosity quite unusual in him, had risen and hobbled to the window; "it gives promise of a good store of holidays for you. Brother Martin will find no

place to keep school in to-morrow."

"Is the fire then in the direction of the school?" asked Marie in alarm, hastily throwing a cloak round her and joining her husband at the window, from whence could be seen the red reflection of a fire flushing the midnight sky. "It seems indeed to be somewhere in that quarter," she added; "but how can we tell that it is in the school itself? God grant there be no lives lost, wherever it is!"

"Ay, ay; get back to your bed, woman," said Jacques surlily. "Jean, my little one, must you

see too? Climb up on this stool then."

He repulsed his wife and welcomed his boy to his side at the same moment. Had the room not been so dark, Marie might have seen on his face a strange expression of gratified malice and somewhat uneasy triumph.

"Tis a huge fire, father," said the child; "would our school-room in a blaze make the sky as red

as that?"

"I fear if it be there the whole house must be in a blaze, and not your school-room only," said

Marie sadly.

A strange wild flash of conviction and remorse passed athwart the lowering face of Jacques le mécontent, but none saw it, and in another minute he rallied and replied fiercely, "Tut, tut, woman, do not croak, get to bed; what do you know about it?"

She might well have retorted, and asked what did he know, for there was room for suspicion in his strange certainty as to the exact locality of the fire, and in his demeanour throughout the whole of the previous week, which had been excited and mysterious; but Marie had no thought of bandying words with him, she crept back to her couch with a cold dumb terror at her heart; and lying there in the darkness, her soul poured itself forth in a mute anguish of supplication for those who might be perishing in the flames, and for him who was still more surely perishing in the snares of sin.

When she went about her work in the bright healthy morning, however, Jacques' strange behaviour seemed but like a bad dream, and she blamed herself for having attached any importance to it.

"It will be hard times with my poor husband if I take to suspecting him," thought she; "he has been worried about the child, and had perhaps been dreaming of the school; so that when wakened with that cry of fire he jumped to the conclusion that it must be there. He looks sorely tired now. I shall not waken him, but make a cake such as he loves for his breakfast; I have meal enough I think."

She carried out this housewifely intention, and by-and-by had the pleasure of seeing Jacques enjoy the fruits of her cookery; but when he had eaten a few mouthfuls, back came little Jean—whom she had despatched to school as usual—crying out,

"Father, you were right; my school is burnt to the ground, and not only that but the whole hotel; there is nothing left but ruins and red ashes."

"And the folks who live there—the good merchant and his wife—what of them?" asked Marie anxiously.

"They could not get out, and were burnt, they and their daughter too. People say—why, what is the matter with father?"

Jacques' rough face was livid, and for the moment he looked utterly stunned; then in a hoarse whisper he asked, "Child, did you say a word to any one of my knowing where the fire was?"

"No, for you told me not, father; do not you remember? It was after my mother had gone back

to bed," replied the astonished boy.

"Ah, but did you obey me? for you are a wilful careless urchin."

The little face, ruddy with exercise and excitement, took a still deeper red as the child answered, "Yes, I know I have often been disobedient; but I promised Lord Louis that I would try to be good, and I do try now. It was just on my lips to say to one of the standers-by that I knew where the fire was last night before any of the other boys in our street did; but then I remembered what you had said, and held my tongue."

"That was well; you must never speak of it," groaned the wretched man, apparently somewhat

relieved.

"But how came you to know, father? for people think the fire was accidental. The provost has sent men to inquire about it, and Long Simon heard one of them say that the fire must have begun in the wood-yard which adjoins the school. I did not hear how the wood got on fire, but the provost's men said it was by accident."

"The saints be praised!" said Marie tremblingly.

But about the poor souls that perished in the

flames; did no one try to rescue them?"

"Oh yes, but they could not be got at; and some people say that they were more drowned than burnt, because such a lot of water was thrown over them by the men who were trying to put the fire out; only I know not whether that is true, for one person said one thing and one another. It is quite certain, though, that they are dead, and Father Martin said he must hurry back to the monastery to have Masses offered for them."

"He was there, then!" exclaimed Jacques, his eyes gleaming as if at the name of an enemy. "What did he say when he saw his fine schoolroom lying in ashes? Did he wish he had not been so free with his evil prophecies once upon a

time, nor with his blows the other day?"

Marie started as if struck by a sharp arrow; while her son answered composedly, "He said scarce anything that I heard, except in pity for the poor dead people; and his face is one from which you can tell nothing, it looks always grave, like this—" And Jean tried to frame his mobile visage into a semblance of the stern blank composure of the monk's iron countenance. "Only when he saw Simon and me he turned round and said, 'Go to your homes, there can be no school at present; but be careful not to make a bad use of your

holiday;' so then we lingered no longer, but came

straight away."

"You have got your holiday, at all events," said Jacques, with a grim smile, which to Marie seemed more terrible than groans. "Sit down and eat this cake; I want no more of it."

Jean obeyed, nothing loth; but between his first mouthfuls looked up and said, "I shall have plenty of time to play now, that is something; but still I did want to show Father Martin how diligent I could be." And he sighed, and looked far from exultant.

"You care for his praise then, boy?" asked

Jacques with bitter contempt.

Jean was busy with the cake, and did not hurry himself to answer: presently, however, he said, "Father Martin never praises us; but I think he is pleased when we do well. Yesterday, when he came near my class and saw that I was taking pains, he laid his hand on my head."

Instinctively the mother put out her hand and smoothed down the mass of curls where the monk's palm had rested in approval; amid all her troubles she could take comfort in the thought of the im-

provement in her once turbulent little son.

The child's question "how came you to know, father?" had been tacitly ignored, but it echoed with a dull pain through Marie's heart for many hours after; and at noon, when Jean was out at play, she summoned courage to say to her husband, "Dear Jacques, was it indeed some friend of yours who had a hand in the fire of last night?"

His eyes fell before hers, so full of sorrowful

inquiry, of tender upbraiding; but he knew he could trust her, and perhaps some lingering feeling of self-respect made him anxious that she should not think him more guilty than he really was, so he answered in a hoarse whisper, "The sparks which set the dry stack of wood on fire were not dropped by accident, and I do not say but what I know the man who did it; yet it was never his intention that the whole house should burn. wood-vard is at the right side of the school-room. you know, while the house is on the left, and is only joined to the school by a long corridor; and he thought that before the flames could reach this they would have been extinguished. I wonder what has become of the poor knave himself. trust he has not perished with the rest."

"With this guilt upon his soul! no, indeed," said Marie, shuddering. "Oh what can have led him to do such a wicked deed as set fire to the school, in which so many ignorant lads were daily

instructed by the good monks!"

"Why, 'twas to spite Brother Martin, whose great pride this school has been these years past. It was my old comrade's business to clean out the school-room and kindle the fires, and be at the monks' orders; and it seems Brother Martin knew what he had been concerned in years ago—he was a Maillotin like the rest of us—and mistrusted him, and spoke harshly to him, forgetful that even a worm will turn. He was but a mean-spirited fellow, this poor Matthieu, but he spoke of his wrongs to me the other day—you remember coming in and finding us together?—and I bade him pluck

up heart, and—why do you look at me so, woman ? I tell you we meant nothing against any one's life!"

"But why should you have any ill-feeling against Brother Martin?" asked Marie, sighing heavily, and averting her pathetic eyes from the face which could not bear their scrutiny. "True, he corrected our little Jean, but 'twas for the child's own good; and Jean himself bears him no malice, but has seemed somehow to like him better ever since that day."

"Yes, they have taken half the spirit out of the boy amongst them, and that is enough to make me angry; but I have a far heavier grudge against Brother Martin. Do you remember the monk who called down God's curse on me and those with me when we were coming out of the Church of S. Jacques, years ago? Ah! I see you do. Well, he and this Brother Martin are one and the same. I saw his face in the procession when Jean was struggling with him, and knew it for the face of

my enemy."
She made no answer, but stood there with a white face of agony, her hand pressed against her heart, as if to still its terrible throbbings. Did he think to avert the curse by adding crime to crime? Could he really account as his personal enemy the righteous man who had denounced his sin? She had had hopes of his repeatance—his amendment; she had thought that the long years of faithful prayer were bringing an answer at last. Spite of his strange behaviour during the past week, she had trusted him, and hoped against hope. But now—? With a hurried uncertain step she sought her

cloak, meaning to go forth to the church to pray, to intercede for him yet again, to speak to GoD for him, since it seemed vain to speak of GoD to him. But as she passed, he plucked at her dress, and she saw written on his countenance such strange forlorn remorse, such dark superstitious terror, that she turned back and clasped him in her arms, asking tenderly what ailed him.

"There will be nothing to stand between me and the curse if you forsake me," said he in a crushed voice, strangely unlike his usual blustering tones; "are you going to inform against me, or what?"

She gave a cry of horror at the supposition, and

then her tears fell like rain over him.

"I was going to pray for you," said she. And at this new proof of utter love the man's evil heart melted, and he bade her pray beside him there, clinging to her as to the good angel who warded off from him the dark fate which too surely would crush him at last.

He resented the monk's denunciation so bitterly just because he believed in its power; he did not think, as Marie did, that the judgment impending over him could be averted by repentance, for he had not fathomed as she had the depths of Divine mercy and forbearance. Which do you think was to win the day at last, his despair or her faith? Surely the latter, for such faith has the promise of triumph, it can remove mountains, it can recover the lost. Only as yet she had need of patience, for what Jacques was feeling now was but the sting of remorse, not the pain of true contrition; and he lung to her in desperation, not in hope.

Some months passed; and Jean was getting tired of holidays, and beginning to nurse a secret ambition to resume his studies and become wise and learned all at once, and astonish Brother Martin and everybody, when a message came for him one day, summoning him to the Hôtel Bourbon to speak with the Duke. Louis was weary of the Court and its pageants, of Paris and its tumults, of the fierce quarrels of the other royal dukes, and the follies of the Queen; and his heart was yearning towards the Rest into which his dearest son had entered. Soon after the boy's death, he had begged permission of the King to retire to his own duchy, "that he might have leisure to think of the concerns of his soul, and to thank GoD for all His goodness towards him," and also to set his affairs in order, for owing to his vast hospitality he had got into debt. This permission he had at length obtained, though with considerable difficulty; so he was now about to set off for the Bourbonnais, and had sent for Jean, to tell him that finding the scholars of S. Germain l'Auxerrois were still dispersed by reason of having no room to assemble in, and not wishing to lose sight of one who had been such a favourite with the young Lord Louis, he had decided on taking him to Moulins, and placing him at a school taught by the members of a college of twelve perpetual canons which he himself had founded there in honour of the Blessed Virgin. The pupils of this school officiated as choristers in the principal church of that town, and were boarded and lodged as well as instructed, and encouraged to prepare themselves for entering the priesthood so soon as they should be of age sufficient; so that to place Jean in it was like giving him a provision for life. The Duke asked Marie's consent to this arrangement; and she gave it gratefully, though with an aching heart, saying to herself, "It is well, it is surely well, for the shadow of our sin"—thus she thought of the guilt which in truth belonged to Jacques alone—"must rest on the child while he stays beneath our poor roof, and he may do better away from us, and under the good Duke's protection."

It was harder work to persuade her husband to acquiesce, but at length she prevailed. It was better, he admitted gloomily, that the child should be absent when the curse fell; it would be some comfort to know that whatever happened their little one was provided for, and would be safe out of the way of the strife which seemed likely to break forth in Paris. This parting with his little bright-faced boy was perhaps the greatest effort of unselfishness that he had ever made, and Marie thanked and blessed him for it as fervently as if her own share in the sacrifice had been nought. To see Jacques humbled and depressed, and owning that his influence had been hurtful to the child, and that it was better to let him go forth before any further ill could be done him, was painful and yet sweet to the wife's tender heart; it looked like conviction and penitence, and she gave thanks accordingly, although the unconscious feeling of her heart was, "Would that my shame and tears might be accepted instead of his, and that GoD would comfort the poor soul hich has sinned and suffered so much !"

The day came at last for Jean to go; and the parting was very sore, for who could say when they might next meet? They had a dim hope that if the Duke should come to Paris again to see the King, he might possibly bring Jean with him among his retinue; and Marie had a vague visionary scheme of Jacques and herself begging their way down to the Bourbonnais some day, and finding a home at Moulins in their old age; but his increasing infirmities made the possibility of this seem doubtful, and she could not be sure in a strange place of meeting with employment which would procure a maintenance for herself and him. good Duke little knew what painful pleasure his kind plans for his son's favourite were giving to the Marie's quiet gratitude had veiled her parents. grief when she spoke to him; and he could not guess that the surly Jacques, whom he thought a cross-tempered seditious scoundrel, was capable of tender and tenacious affection. As for Jean himself, he was too full of delight at the thought of travelling with the Duke and seeing new places and people, to realize all that the separation involved; it was not till the very moment of farewell arrived that his bright spirits became clouded, and even then he remembered Brother Martin's counsels, and made a valiant effort not to cry. A serving-man of the Bourbon household came for him, and might not be kept waiting, so parting words were brief, and Marie withdrew herself resolutely from the clinging arms which seemed as if they could never let go their hold. Looking back when he had got a little way down the street, Jean saw his father

and mother still standing at the door; Marie half supporting Jacques with one hand, while with the other she shaded her eyes from the sun, that at least nought but the inevitable dazzling of tears should hide from her the last glimpse of her boy.

That face so strong and tender in its grief, so lifted by the grandeur of the soul within from all likeness to the common every-day faces of the sympathizing neighbours round her, lived in Jean's memory all his life through. When he read of the saints, he pictured them with eyes like his mother's; and long years after, when his pilgrim feet were treading reverently the soil of the Holy Land, and he was told, "Here rested the Blessed Virgin on her flight into Egypt;" "Here stood the Holy Mother gazing on the Cross;" the image called up in his mind involuntarily resembled that which he had seen through blinding tears on this bright spring morning, in the year of grace 1405.



CHAPTER XI.

"Let her sleep!
Slumber holy, dreamless, deep,
Cover eyes that waked to weep."

M. S

T was in the spring of 1405 that little Jean set off from Paris in the train of the Duke of Bourbon, and spite of the mourning habiliments which they wore

for the young Lord Louis, the party formed a gallant cortège enough. In Lent of the following year a very different company issued from the gates of the city-a crowd of poor and infirm people, mostly on foot, the halest among them carrying the invalids on their backs, or in rudely-formed litters, while others were laden with such provisions as they had managed to get together for the journey. They were bound on a long and toilsome expedition, their destination being Le Puy, in the province of Vellai, at which place it was believed there was to be found a general pardon of sin and healing of diseases whenever the Feast of the Annunciation happened to fall on Good Friday, as would be the case this year. Do not wonder if I say that Jacques d'Orronville and his wife were among the pilgrims; for remember that Marie with all her large-hearted goodness was still but an ignorant woman of the fifteenth century, believing as firmly as those around her in the superstitions of the age. The "Religion of Holy Places" received her undoubting reverence; and to her it seemed just as natural and credible that God should sometimes show forth miracles of healing both for soul and body at Le Puy—a place rich in the relics of saints and martyrs—as that He should have sent an angel at certain seasons to trouble the waters of the Pool of Siloam.

So when Jacques roused himself from the gloomy silence, in which now he was wont to sit for hours, and said, "Wife, they tell me there is pardon for all sin to be had at Le Puy this year; is it possible to get there, think you?" she received the suggestion as an inspiration from on high, and in a rapture of love and hope poured out her thankfulness to Him Who she believed had implanted the thought in Jacques' hitherto stubborn heart. "Was it possible?" It should be possible! She would beg for him, be a staff to him, would carry him if need be! No mere impediment of time or distance or fatigue should hold him back from the pardon which he now yearned to receive.

She consulted with Father Ambrose; and far from discouraging her, he told her of others who were going on the same pilgrimage, and urged her to join company with them, as the roads were not safe for solitary travellers. Further, it was in his power to provide her with money for the journey, since the Duke of Bourbon had left in his hands 1 sum to be applied to the use of Jean's parents at

any time and in any way that he should think desirable. During the past winter he had given out to them from month to month a small portion of this, for the purchase of such comforts as Jacques' increasing infirmities rendered necessary; and now he offered to give them sufficient to help them on their pilgrimage, and to keep the rest safely for them till they returned.

"Thanks, my Father," said Marie gratefully; "but indeed I do not know that we shall ever return; for if God gives us assurance of His pardon we shall then find it in our hearts, I think, to go to Moulins, which they tell me is almost on the road from Le Puy, and see our dear son. Coming to him as comforted and forgiven, I do not fear that we shall bring him ill-fortune; and if we could settle in the town somewhere, we might be able to see him from time to time."

"And this money will serve to maintain you there, my daughter; so perhaps you had best take it all with you; my only fear is lest you should be robbed of it on your journey."

It was a fear which Marie shared; and finally she begged the good priest to give them only what they needed at the present time, and keep the rest in charge for them, trusting that they might find means to let him know when they arrived at Moulins, and that some opportunity might arise for his sending the money to them by a trusty hand.

"God speed your errand, my daughter, and give you a happy meeting with your little Jean, to whom I send my blessing," said Father Ambrose kindly, as she bade him farewell. "I fear you have a toilsome journey before you; but fare forth in faith, and angels shall be your guard. 'Put thou thy trust in the LORD, and He shall give thee thy heart's desire.'"

It was well she had this trust to cling to, for the difficulties of the pilgrimage were considerable, and she soon had reason to congratulate herself that she had left the greater portion of the money in Father Ambrose's faithful keeping: for when they were about half-way on their route, all that she had not already spent of the sum she had taken with her, was stolen from her one night by the cruel hand of a pretended pilgrim, who had joined the band for dishonest purposes, and not from any feel-

ing of devotion.

After this, Jacques and she begged their way onwards, soon falling far behind the others, and oftentimes in want and suffering, which told even more on Marie's constitution than on that of her infirm husband. Her strength gave way rapidly as they proceeded on their toilsome journey; and at length. as they were crossing a bridge over the Allier, she dropped on the ground utterly worn out, in a faint which Jacques took for death. He would fain have died beside her in the agony of that belief; but some passers-by comforted him, and exerted themselves to restore Marie to consciousness. vived at last, but her weakness was great, her wearied limbs refused to support her any longer, and alas! it was now the Wednesday in Holy Week. and Le Puy was still many leagues distant. soon as thought returned, her lips began to move in prayer; perhaps she hoped even now for some

miracle of mercy which might enable her to attain the end of her pilgrimage—for the sound of a Divine Voice, saying, "Arise, and walk!" "there was no voice, nor any that answered;" and she felt in her heart that she was dying—dying with Jacques still unpardoned—dying almost within sight of the goal she had so longed to reach! swooned away once more in utter sorrow; and one of the peasants who had come to her assistance advised that she should be carried to the Hospital of S. Julien, at Moulins, which he said was close at hand, and had been erected by the good Duke Louis for the special reception of poor wayfaring people. Thither accordingly she was taken; and Jacques asked shelter for the night for himself and her, giving up almost with indifference all hope of reaching Le Puy—which indeed was further distant than he knew of—having no room in his mind for any feeling but that of utter despair at the prospect of losing his faithful wife. For he loved her, this crabbed evil-natured man; he reverenced her in his secret soul as we reverence angels; she seemed to him to stand between him and his rightful doom, sheltering him with her purity, with her love, with her unfailing intercessions, from the vengeance He had learned of late to which his sins deserved. lean on her more and more: he looked to her to comfort and support him when his hour of death should come; he had never till now faced the possibility of her dying before him.

All night he watched beside the couch on which she had been laid, waiting, hoping—perhaps praying, in an ignorant despairing way—longing to see the sweet eyes unclose, the pale face relax from its look of death-like stupor. One of the monks in whose charge the Hospital was placed tried, but tried in vain, all the powers of his leech-craft; she was not dead, but the trance of exhaustion in which she lay would too probably end in death; and it seemed doubtful whether consciousness would return at all.

With the early morning came some messengers from the ducal palace. It was the custom of the Duke to wash the feet of thirty poor people every year on Maundy Thursday, and some of the lodgers at S. Julien were needed to make up the requisite number. But few were there on this occasion. owing to the concourse at Le Puy; and the Duke's servitors bade Jacques come with the others, and did not heed his assertion that he must needs remain beside his dying wife. The lacqueys made a mere matter of business of that which to their highsouled master was a species of religious service, and hustled forth the ragged inmates of the Hospital, paying little attention to the remonstrances of the monks. It seemed to them as simple a matter to provide thirty beggars to have their feet washed, as thirty flitches of bacon, or anything else that their master might be pleased to command. class was insolent to a proverb; and even in the Bourbon household the underlings had not all imbibed the courteous and noble spirit which distinguished their princely head.

"You had better go with them willingly, and speak them fair," said one of the monks to Jacques; "you will not be long gone, and I will watch beside

your wife while you are absent. If you entreat the good Duke's charity for her, he may perhaps send his own physician to attend her, who is more skilled than I; for he grudges nothing to the poor of Christ."

"I must ask him for my son," said Jacques, rousing himself; "the lad should be here when his mother wakes—she will look for him, no doubt." And before the surprised monk could ask an explanation of this speech, Jacques had been hurried away by the servitors, and was on his road to the palace.

When he arrived there he was taken into the great hall, where a good many poor people were already assembled, and bidden to seat himself on an oaken bench close to the wall. A silver ewer was then brought in, and an attendant, with long narrow towels fringed with gold over his arm, took his place beside it. But the Duke was not present as yet, and Jacques sat chafing at the delay, distracted with fears lest Marie should awake from her trance and want him, or lest death should take her before he could return to her side. He sat with his head sunk on his breast, noting nothing of the sombre decorations of the hall, in which now the three blue fleurs-de-lys of the Bourbons were the only points of colour; caring nothing for the whispers of those around him; wishing only that the Duke would come, so that he might ask for his little Jean, and then wend his way back to his wife, never to leave her again while she lived.

Meanwhile, Duke Louis was at prayers in the chapel; but in truth, though the time seemed

tedious to poor Jacques, it was not really long before he came forth and entered the hall. was habited in black, and looked grave, though not gloomy. He was more than ever set on a literal following of his Redeemer's footsteps, and believed that in washing the feet of the poor he was doing a merciful and Christian act, which GoD would accept, so he was ready to "show mercy with cheerfulness;" but this was his LORD's week of sorrow, and his kind face wore a quiet shadow, which sprang in part from the memory of that, and in part from his own private griefs. He was attended by but one esquire, for he did not wish to do his good works before men to be seen of them; but following after was a boy whose plain conventual dress forbade the supposition that he was one of the pages of the household, though at the same time he had not the air of a menial. Such a brightfaced boy it was! tall and strong of his age-for he did not look above ten years old-and with such beaming intelligence in his eyes and on his open brow, that he might well have attracted the notice even of a stranger. Jacques, however, did not look at him as if the face were strange, but with delighted and yet wondering recognition; for it was his own son, only changed and improved. Scarcely so robustlooking, perhaps, as he had been a year ago, for the confinement and strict discipline of school told rather hardly on a growing boy; but sweeter and better looking, with a new refinement, a new thoughtfulness, about him, such as made Jacques gaze at him vith a certain doubtful respect, marvelling if this bould indeed be his own lad, his little saucy Jean.

Beloved by the Duke for the sake of Lord Louis. the child was often sent for to pass a day at the palace, and be examined by Maître Pierre de Chantelle in the progress he had made in learning; and loving his patron with all the strength of his little heart, he had striven to improve in knowledge and in all courteous behaviour, so as to win a smile or a word of praise from that gracious mouth. the idle pettish ways in which he had been indulged at home had been repressed throughout this year by his teachers—repressed most firmly, and even with a degree of harshness which might have proved hurtful to a less blithe and gallant spirit; and so between the Duke's encouragement of what was good, and his masters' repression of what was bad. our little friend Jean had altered materially since his coming to the Bourbonnais.

Poor, ignorant, crippled Jacques, travel-soiled and weary, and in tattered garments, felt himself to be a miserable object as he looked at the graceful form of his son, and, hoarse with hunger and sorrow, could not at first frame a word to call the child's

attention to him.

He was sitting in the shadow at the far end of the hall, and Jean, who was watching the Duke, did not at once perceive him; but when Louis, turning from the more respectable poor who sat on the nearer benches, said gently, "Nay, the last first," and walked down the line to begin by washing the feet of him who looked the most miserable of all, Jean followed, and in this poor crippled object, ungraciously sticking out his foot as the princely figure of his host knelt before him to perform that most humble of offices, the boy, without shame, but with emotions of pitying love, recognised his father, and speedily advertised the fact by a joyous cry of welcome.

"We were on a pilgrimage to Le Puy; your mother is dying," said Jacques in his hoarse faint voice, as the Duke stepped aside to let father and son embrace: and at the first words Jean looked up at him with wonder and reverence, while at the second his bright face fell, and distress took the

place of joy.

There was but the delay of a few moments, during which the weary pilgrim feet were bathed and dried with almost reverent care by the good Duke, before Jacques was allowed to set forth on his return to the Hospital of S. Julien, accompanied by his son, and also by the Duke's own physician, whom, as the monk had foreseen, Louis willingly despatched to Marie's assistance. When they arrived, they found that she had recovered consciousness, and had asked for a confessor, who was now with her; so Jacques and his boy tarried a little while in an outer room, talking together in broken whispers, their hearts meantime yearning towards her whom the priest was shriving, and their faces wet with tears at the thought of what this portended.

Ah! how white and wan she looked when Jean was at length admitted to behold her! How visibly life was fading out of the beautiful eyes! How plainly death was drawing its painful lines round the worn sweet mouth! The Duke's phycian felt her pulse, but shook his head, and pre-

scribed no remedies, for it was clear that none would avail. She was very near her rest, but going to it humbly, resignedly, not in joy or triumph; burdened to the very last not by her own sins onlythough they seemed to her dark enough—but by that sin of her husband's, which might even now, she thought, have received a manifest pardon but for her—for her who had fallen by the wayside, instead of pressing onward to Le Puy.

Ah! if there had been one to tell her that He who had given Jacques the desire of pardon had not given it vainly, but was ready to accept and crown it with His forgiveness; that not at Le Puy only or chiefly, but in all places, His miracles of mercy could be freely wrought, the heavy burden might have been lifted, the holy soul might have passed forth in perfect peace! Perhaps as the priest held the crucifix before her, some faint glimpse of such a truth may have struck home to her sore heart; for almost the first words she said to Jean were. "My dearest one, see that you love your father more than ever, and comfort him, and show him honour; he is one of God's penitents."

"And your mother is one of GoD's saints," said Jacques, kneeling down and covering with kisses his wife's hands, and even the coverlet on which they rested. "Oh! my Marie, my Marie, this is surely the sorest punishment that ever befell a sinner! You to die and not take me with you! I who am nothing without you—who do but

cumber the earth."

She gazed at him tenderly, but with extreme astonishment. Never had she heard him speak in such a way before. She had been accustomed formerly to contempt and blame from him; lately to a kind of ungracious awkward affection; but to be spoken to by him with reverence, with passionate adoring love, was something so utterly new and strange, that it puzzled and, in her humility, even

pained her.

"Nay, I am naught," she said; "forgive me all I have ever done amiss to you; forgive me most of all for having hindered you from reaching Le Puy. My son, my little Jean," she added, struggling to clasp his hand with her feeble fingers as a sudden thought struck her, "when you grow to be a man, go on pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and pray there for your father's soul and for mine. God will hear you if you are a holy man, though He has not heard me who am but a weak and sinful woman."

"Why do you think He has not heard you, my daughter?" asked the priest, who still stood by.

"He has not let us reach Le Puy," she moaned in anguish. "But still His Will is the best, He has seen that we—that I was unworthy. I am but a poor woman, and know nothing. Father Ambrose says that He loves my husband far far better than I; if so, He will not surely let him perish. Ah! but then that monk's words—'Whoso defileth—!"

Shudders shook her dying frame as she recalled them, and she leaned her poor face down upon her 'usband's. "Pray! let some one pray!" sobbed

s. Then the priest prayed, though but dimly ssing at the secret of her great grief, and hope

revived within her. "I am but a poor woman, and know nothing," she repeated when he had ended; "God and His saints are full of knowledge and full of love."

By-and-by she raised her face again and looked at Jean.

"How you are grown, my child!" said she. "My blessing be on the good Duke for his charity towards you! When I fainted there on the road, I never thought to see your sweet face again; come nearer, for something clouds my sight; there now, I feel your little mouth against my cheek—that is so good! Entreat Duke Louis for your father, and do not forget what I said about the Holy—ah!" and breath failed her, so that she could say no more.

After awhile she went on speaking, but more faintly. "To-morrow will be Good Friday, will it not? Father, tell me anew, I beseech you, how our LORD died. He took a thief with Him into Paradise, was it not so? Tell me quickly, for I am dying."

The priest bent down to her, repeating the wondrous history of the "death of Him Who died on Tree," and she listened as it were with effort, for her senses were growing dim.

"And there was darkness over all the land, from the sixth to the ninth hour," said the priest's voice

slowly and solemnly.

"Yes," broke in the dying voice, "truly there is darkness!—Husband, give me your hand,—LORD, Thou wilt surely condemn us or save us together. Oh! of Thy mercy take us into Paradise,

as Thou didst take the thief! There is light there, though here it is dark, dark."

In this darkness her spirit departed; trembling, when it might have rejoiced; fearing, when it might have trusted; but faithful, humble, and purified, making up in love for what it lacked in knowledge. So, be sure, many souls departed in those dark ages, which yet were ages of faith; souls who knew not perhaps so fully as we know "the glorious Gospel of the Blessed God;" but who for all that have doubtless entered into the calm golden light of Paradise, there to wait the radiant dawn of the Resurrection morning, when they and we—if we be faithful—shall alike, "know as we are known," and see no more "through a glass darkly," but "face to face."



CHAPTER XII.

"The living are so far away:

But thou—thou seemest strangely near:
Know'st all my silent heart would say,
Its peace, its pain, its hope, its fear.
From all this coil thou hast slipp'd away,
As softly as a cloud departs:
Along the hill-side purple gray,
Into the heaven of patient hearts."

"Poems," by the Author of "John Halifax."

"O mea, spes mea, tu Syon aurea, clarior auro, Agmine splendida, stans duce florida, perpete lauro: O bona Patria, num tua gaudia teque videbo? O bona Patria, num tua præmia plena tenebo?"

HUS, in the words of the holy monk,
Bernard of Morlaix, sang a clear boyish voice in the porch of the Hospital
of S. Julien, one July day; and behind
the songster, far back in the shadow, was an old
bent man, who leaned his head down upon his
hands, moaning faintly to himself, but in whose
heart was beginning to burn some measure of that
desire for "a better country, that is an heavenly,"
which had inspired this glorious hymn.

"You sing well, my little Jean," said the mourner, lifting his head at last, "and you sing as if you knew the meaning of your song and loved it, though it seems by the sound to be a very different ditty from those you used to chirp in our old home at Paris."

"I have almost forgotten those," said the boy, colouring; "I like this song because I once heard Lord Louis say the words, and because it is about Golden Sion, and the crown the good Lord gives His soldiers. "Tis a braver city than Paris, that city of God, my masters tell me; 'tis more beautiful than heart can think!" And he raised his bright eyes sparkling with enthusiasm to his father's sorrowful face.

"Never did I hear a boy speak like this!" said Jacques to himself, the old instinct of dissatisfaction with monkish teaching rising strongly within him. "Ah, but his mother would have loved to hear such words from him; he is a true son of hers now!" was the after-thought, and the one which gained the mastery.

"And so you are still happy at school, Jean," he

said aloud; "what do you do all day?"

"Chant the services, write, read, learn, dine, sup, and sleep," replied Jean, as quickly as ever he could get the words out, "and sometimes we are allowed to work in the garden and run races in the avenue; I like that, 'tis great fun."

"And you have plenty of school-fellows?"

"Oh yes, all the other choristers. There is wise Bernard, with a head so long that he can learn anything; and silly Benoit, with brains so small that he can learn nothing; and then there is studious Paul, and oh! there is such a boy! Laurence his name is, he is so idle—at least he used to be; but one night when he was asleep in his cell he was awakened by demons, and they asked him if he could repeat the Psalter, and when they found he could not, they scourged him soundly, and so now he is frightened, and tries to learn."

Jacques heard this extraordinary anecdote with about as much composure as parents now-a-days hear the less marvellous stories of their school-boy sons: neither he nor Jean perceived anything very odd or ridiculous in the idea of demons inculcating a knowledge of the Psalter, nor did they seek to explain away the alleged occurrence, either by supposing that Laurence had been troubled with a bad dream, or that the canons themselves had been the authors of the nocturnal chastisement. Such superstitious fancies seem strange now, but they were common then, and our little Jean was subject, of course, to the foolish as well as the wise influences of the age. I am not sure but what he half cherished in secret a daring wish that the demons might visit his cell, so that he might see what they were like, and might give them an opportunity of discovering how well he knew the Psalter! Sometimes he opened his eyes in the darkness, and tried to fancy he smelt brimstone, or caught a glimpse of horns and tails: but nothing further ever came of it, and he always fell asleep in the midst of his expectation.

"It is nearly time for me to return to the school," said he, after a pause, during which he had been twisting the ends of his leathern girdle round and round, and thinking of Laurence's midnight visitors; "I wish you lived there with me, father, you must be so dull here."

"No, no, my lad, I talk with some of the wayfaring men who stop here, when I have a mind, and manage to rub along somehow. Needs must bear up to the end, for your mother's sake: she watches me from above, I do think. Ah, Marie, Marie! What am I without you?"

He looked upward with a sort of passion, and yet with patience: "Must bear it!" he said to himself, when grief gnawed at his heart. "I am a sinful old man, and must bear what is laid on me, then perhaps the Holy Virgin will take me to my Marie at last."

The child's sorrow, less profound, but as true, welled up to his eyes at the mention of his mother's name; never would it be his lot to love or be loved by any other woman, but the sacred memory of his mother kept his heart tender, and would save him from ever being one of the narrow souls who in their ignorance despised and slandered human love. Marie and the young Lord Louis—he thought of them both as among the saints, and that thought made the spiritual world more near and real to him: the way of holiness seemed to him all the brighter because they had trodden it.

He wended his way back to the town, while Jacques tarried still in the porch, being by the Duke's favour a permanent inmate of the Hospital of S. Julien. He had dwelt there ever since his wife's leath, and had become somewhat of a favourite rith the monks who had the management of this

pilgrim house; for though rough in manner and curt in speech, he was quiet and peaceable in behaviour, and willingly received instruction in heavenly things. It is true that he heard in total silence what was said on this subject, but he showed his interest by the kindling light in his sunken eyes and his deep attention.

He had been used to rail at his superiors, and grumble at everything, in the old days when his wife was near him to listen and to soothe; now he seldom grumbled, and indeed, hardly ever spoke. except to answer a question. Silently he pondered over the past, and revolved in his mind the possibility of such a guilt-stained man as he being ever admitted into that Paradise where Marie, he felt sure, had already entered. Would his present penitence, would the purgatorial fires in store for him, as he believed, suffice to cleanse his soul, and fit him finally to take his place beside his pure and holy wife? He had made little of her while she lived, and treated her but hardly, yet now that she was gone from him he worshipped her memory, and well-nigh prayed to her as his patron saint, bowing to her influence as he had never done while she was at his side, and learning through his love for her to open his heart to Higher Love, and to become humble and teachable, and conscious of his own vileness. Could poor Marie have foreseen the influence of her death upon him, she would have died not only with resignation, as she did, but thankfully and gladly: he had missed the visible pardon which she had hoped for at Le Puy: but a much surer pardon was in store for him, even that

which is promised to heartfelt penitence by Him who came to save the lost.

The only bit of earthly brightness in his life now was his occasional intercourse with his blithe and clever son, who, at the Duke's desire, was allowed to visit him from time to time. I am not sure but what the perpetual canons thought this small scholar of theirs had overmuch liberty, for besides his frequent visits to the Hospital of S. Julien, he was sent for now and then, as has been said, to see the Duke: however, in deference to Louis's wishes, they did not remonstrate, and little Jean was allowed to enjoy his privileges to the utmost.

The Duke had never recovered the loss of his favourite son, and was so grieved, moreover, by the increasing troubles of the kingdom, which he felt himself powerless to check, that he absented himself as much as possible from the Court, and spent as much time as he could in his beloved Bourbon-He wished to prepare himself for death, he said: and being anxious to set his house in order. had begun by ascertaining the amount of the debts which he had incurred by his large hospitalities in Three old knights, trusted friends of his, L'Hermite de la Faye, Jean de Chastelmorant, and Messire François d'Aubrecicourt, had examined into his affairs by his desire, with the assistance of a clerk whose business it was to write down the result of their investigations; and they had decided that all his debts could be paid off in three years. and had advised him to discontinue the expensive buildings which he had in hand, more especially the additions to his Hotel at Paris, which had cost him

so much, and to be content with finishing only the convent which he was having built for the Celestines at Vichy.

It may surprise some, who think that in the middle ages consideration for the poor and weak was altogether lost sight of, to hear that these good old knights recommended that he should first pay off all his small debts, those which he owed to *poor* people who might be suffering from want of the money, and that this good advice seems to have been

promptly acted on.

Dear honourable unlettered old knights, who were obliged to have a clerk to make their figures for them, and who, no doubt, would have thought it infra dig. to put their friend's accounts down in black and white, even if they could: I think they reckoned to some purpose! I think when they advised the Duke to leave off all the buildings which he had designed for his own pleasure and ambition, and to finish only that one which he had designed for the glory of GoD; and when they showed him the way to pay off all his creditors honourably, the poorest first, they set an example which our nineteenth century gentlemen need not disdain to follow. And as for the Duke himself. well might our little Jean venerate him, and forget the revolutionary creed instilled in infancy, and think all nobles noble for his sake; for in these his latter years, during which the boy learnt to know him, full holy was his life and conversation, and more and more perfect grew the high-souled character of him who was to be known to posterity as "Louis the Good." There were holy priests.

doubtless, among the little fellow's teachers, by whose example he may have profited, but the example of a holy prince was still more effectual; he learnt thereby that devotion and purity were manly things, not meant merely for the clergy and for women, or for the religious by profession; and who can say of how much good this lesson may have been to him?

A very different example was being set by the other royal dukes. Paris was distracted with the quarrels of Orleans and Burgundy, the King's brother and cousin, neither of whom could be content with their own share of power, each wishing to govern the King and kingdom according to his own In October, 1405, through the mediation of the King of Navarre and the Duke of Bourbon, a hollow peace had been agreed upon between them, and a notice published by a herald at the Parliament and at the Châtelet, that "Thanks to Gop. the princes had resolved to live for the future in perfect union." They had entered Paris together, with every sign of amity; and in token of perfect reconciliation, had even gone so far-thus an old chronicler relates—as to sleep that night in the same bed! But in the following year, 1406, of which we have just been writing, differences again arose, and Louis of Bourbon, spite of his wish for retirement, was obliged to go more than once to Paris, and resume the part of peace-maker. Little Jean begrudged these visits sorely, for in the Duke's absence his holidays were fewer, and he was but seldom sent for to pass a day at the Palace at Moulins. or at the Castle of Bourbon l'Archambaud; so it was with great joy that he heard in the autumn that a truce had been put to the cousins' dissensions for a while by the Duke of Orleans going to Aquitaine to make war against the English. "Our Duke will be able to stay at home now," said he, capering with delight. "And the good people of Paris will have a little peace," said Jacques, who still retained some remnant of his former interest in politics, and his grudge against the royal dukes.

Poor people! It was but a brief peace after all, for Orleans returned to the capital only too soon, and gave fresh offence to Burgundy, by persuading the King to forbid that prince to attempt the siege of Calais. Jean sans peur—would that, like the noble Bayard, he had been also sans reproche!—who had been collecting forces in Flanders for this purpose, was obliged to disband them, and came back to Paris in high displeasure, which he endeavoured to mask beneath an exaggerated show of affection. On the Eve of S. Clement, 1407, he paid a friendly visit to the Duke of Orleans, and accepted an invitation to dine with him the next day; but a few hours later on that same fatal eve. Orleans was basely assassinated by hirelings whom all men believed to be in the pay of the Duke of Burgundy, and by him incited to this cruel and cowardly deed.

The Duke of Orleans was little loved by the people at large, as we have seen, whereas his cousin was comparatively popular; yet that was a mournful night for Paris, in which the murdered body of this gay and eloquent prince lay covered with a white pall in the Church of S. Guillaume, with the King of Sicily, and many princes, knights,

and esquires, shedding tears over it, and the monks of the church saying prayers and singing psalms beside it till the morning dawned. The shadow of a great crime gloomed over the city; and on the morrow, when the princes, the clergy, and nobles, went in state to remove the body from the keeping of the Guillemins, and convey it to the Church of the Celestines, where it was to be interred, the lurid light of the torches carried by the esquires of the defunct shone on many sad faces among the spectators, as well as among those who formed the funeral procession.

The Duke of Burgundy himself was there, unconvicted as yet, though widely suspected of the crime, habited in mourning like the other princes, holding one corner of the pall,—the other three being borne by the King of Sicily and the Dukes of Berri and Bourbon,—and uttering groans and shedding tears, or feigning to do so, just as did the other mourners. But a very few months later, he confessed to having instigated the assassination; and though pardoned after a while by the weak King, was for the future held in abhorrence by all good men and true, and more especially by our noble Louis of Bourbon.

Louis had wept honest tears for his nephew, and could not give the right hand of fellowship to his murderer; so when the King of Sicily and the Duke of Berri went to meet Burgundy at Amiens, to confer with him about the murder, meaning to rersuade him to ask pardon of Charles, he, though ominated to the same embassy, excused himself om it, and would not even remain any longer at

Court, but demanded permission to retire once more to his own estates, and remain there entirely. "For he loved better," says the chronicler monk of S. Denis, "to renounce the share which he had in the government, than consent to compound with the state for the murder of his nephew, which made him exclaim loudly and many times, as I have been assured, that he could never look with a favourable eye upon the author of a treason so cowardly and infamous."

It was a terribly severe season, and the country was deep in snow when the Duke of Bourbon quitted Paris for the last time, accompanied by his son, the Count of Clermont. Great numbers of peasants were employed with shovels in clearing the way for him, and his good town of Moulins looked white and dreary as he lifted his sad eyes to behold it from afar. But there glad faces met him, for he was well beloved by his people; and none were gladder than the face of loving little Jean, who could have whistled and danced for very joyfulness to think that his friend the Duke was come back for good, had whistling and dancing been allowable in one of the gravely nurtured pupils of the Canons of S. Mary.



CHAPTER XIII.

"See how calm he looks, and stately, Like a warrior on his shield, Waiting till the flush of morning Breaks along the battle-field!

"O thou lion-hearted warrior!
Reck not of the after-time;
Honour may be deemed dishonour,
Loyalty be called a crime.

"Sleep in peace, with kindred ashes
Of the noble and the true;
Hands that never failed their country,
Hearts that never baseness knew."
ATTORIS.

HE next three years passed but slowly, both with the Duke of Bourbon, and with his little protégé. The child was longing for fuller life, for manhood,

and a man's privileges; his patron was wearying for the calm of death, for the long rest of Paradise.

All was going ill at the Court, where the wicked Queen went on with her extravagance, and Montagu, the master of the household, wasted the King's substance, and the Dauphin came begging for money, having not received sufficient income to de-

fray the necessary expenses of his maintenance; Louis had no wish to return there: yet neither was he entirely content with the comparative inactivity of his life in the country; and in 1409 he asked the King's leave to escort the Queen of Jerusalem to Naples, to see her mother Yolande, and afterwards to go a pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre; but this permission was denied him. He had visions, too, of visiting the Morea, which was desirous of submitting to his allegiance, and where he had twice sent his friend Chastelmorant, who had brought him "the seals of the town of Arcadia:" and he had plans for taking Cyprus; for though he was old, says his biographer, he did not wish to be lazy: but on neither of these errands would Charles allow him to quit France, probably feeling a certain security in retaining within his kingdom this loyal and noble subject, on whose aid he could rely with certainty should danger menace the throne.

So the Duke remained in the Bourbonnais, occupying himself at one time with superintending the erection of the convent of the Celestines at Vichy, at another with the less peaceful employment of driving away a marauding knight called Amé de Viry, who at the head of a thousand horsemen, had taken his town of Challemont. His melancholy deepened with the commencement of the year 1410, which was to be his last on earth; but he had one great cause of thankfulness in the restored peace of the Church. Pope Alexander had been elected by a general council at Pisa during the previous year, and the Great Schism was over at last.

KI DIC CITCAU DOMISIII WAS OVCI AU IASU.

Doubtless there was joy for this cause in his heart,

when on the 10th of August, he kept the festival of S. Lawrence cheerily in his town of Montbrison; but even then, we are told, he had a strong presentiment of approaching death; and on the morrow he was taken ill. He had himself conveyed to Montlucon, and after a few days' illness he rallied, but the improvement was but temporary; on Saturday, the 16th he felt worse again, and sent a message to our little Jean to come at once and remain the Sunday with him, believing it would be his last on earth.

Jean, on his arrival, was conducted to the Duke's bedroom, where a quaint yet touching scene was being enacted. Louis had all his life taken considerable pride in his beautiful hair, which even now, though slightly touched with silver, was very fine and abundant; and in this his last illness, his tender conscience made him feel this little piece of vanity to be a sin. Wishing, therefore, to mortify it, he had ordered his head to be shaved; and just as Jean entered the chamber, the rich locks were falling beneath the shears of the Duke's barber—a sight which struck the boy with wonder and regret.

"Do the physicians say you will be better when your hair is off, Sire?" he asked modestly, pressing near to his patron, and lifting his eyes with affectionate concern to the thin pale face of the invalid.

"No; it is not for my body's health, but that of my soul, that I make this little sacrifice," said Louis, smiling; "we must all strive against vanity, my shild, and I have been guilty of it too long." The shears continued their work, and the boy looked on shyly—taking to heart, we will hope, this very practical lesson. Then when the work of destruction was complete, the Duke trod the hair under foot, and passing through the open door of his oratory, knelt before the altar, repeating these simple words, which his biographer records: "Beau Sire Dieu, Jesus Christ, my Father and Creator, of all the little delights of this mortal life, that on which I have most prided myself is my hair, and I would fain do so no longer; let it lie there in token of victory over pride." And then all his attendants withdrew softly, and left the simple yet great heart of their master to commune alone with God for a little space.

Later in the day Jean was permitted to sup with the Duke, who, though saying little himself, encouraged him to talk freely, and to tell of the progress he was making in his studies. "And how goes it with your poor father?" Louis asked presently.

"He was well, my lord, thank you, when I saw him last, on the eve of S. Lawrence; and Brother Clement thinks he is gaining strength rather than losing it, so I trust he will yet live many years; though, it is true, he does not desire a long life for himself."

"Who can desire it, that has known the evil and the misery of this world?" sighed the dying noble, as he pushed away from him his almost untasted food; "but yet I could have wished to live to make a pilgrimage to the holy city Jerusalem; it seems hard to close my eyes on the world, having never seen that blessed place. When you grow to be a man, Jean, I trust you will go thither."

"I mean to go, Sire," said the lad briefly.

"You have the desire already, then?" asked the

Duke, in some surprise.

"My mother, when she was a-dying, bade me go on pilgrimage, and pray for her soul, and for the soul of my father," replied Jean gravely, suspending his supper awhile out of respect for the dignity of the subject, though his vigorous young appetite was not yet satisfied.

"Ah! it was well thought of," replied Louis; "and now I bid you go; so, if you live, see that you obey this double command; and prythee of your charity remember my soul also, when you

kneel at that holy shrine."

"There is no fear of my forgetting you, my lord," said the boy warmly; "would that you could have gone thither yourself, and that I might have gone in your train! I should have liked that so much!" he added, with boyish naïveté.

"Doubtless," said Louis, with a sudden smile, which quickly vanished into gravity again, "but that is not to be. Remember, when you go on pilgrimage, how holy a mission you are undertaking, and do not go in a worldly spirit, as some have done, nor seek worldly companions on the way, but company with the devout, and let the good Angels be your guard."

"There are, doubtless, many holy Angels in the Holy Land," murmured Jean thoughtfully; "do you think, Sire, that I shall meet with any dangers

there?"

"With some, I fear; and—"

"Nay, but my lord, I do not fear, I hope, and I shall meet them as S. David in Holy Writ met the lion and the bear; and if there should be any giants there, I shall deal with them as he dealt with the paynim Goliath."

"But you are too forward of speech, my son," said Maître Pierre de Chantelle; "you interrupted your good lord, the Duke, in what he was saying

to vou."

Jean did not pout now under a reproof, as he used to do in the old times; his eyes drooped, and he said humbly enough, "Forgive me, Father; and you too, Sire. I ask pardon for interrupting you."

"It is granted, little heart," said the kind Duke. "And so you mean to be like the good knight David? Well, God give you faith and valour! but remember, your errand to the Holy Land will not be to fight with Saracens, but to pray at the Holy Shrine. And now I will leave you to finish your meal, and will get me to bed, for I am weary."

Jean tarried at the castle that night, and was admitted to the Duke's presence again the next day. Louis was still more feeble then than he had been the evening before; even Jean could perceive how rapidly his weakness was increasing, and the end drawing near. Weak as he was, however, he rose as usual, and went into his oratory to hear Mass. It was Sunday, and he desired to communicate; seeing his great feebleness, the celebrant wished to bring the holy Eucharist to him as he sat, but he declined this, saying reverently, "It is not meet that the worthy Creator should come to

me unworthy." And then rising, he approached the Altar, and knelt humbly before it, his tears flowing, perhaps at the thought of that unworthiness of which he had just made mention.

Little Jean's eyes were wet many times that day, as the feeling came more and more home to him of how soon his noble friend was to be taken away from him; but yet in the afternoon he found himself laughing at some droll jests of the little pages who were gathered together in the ante-room; and the smile was still on his face, when Maître Etienne de Bar, the Duke's secretary, came from the inner chamber to fetch him, saying the Duke would speak with him awhile.

Louis's eyes marked, not unapprovingly, the traces of mirth on the young face; and when Jean colouring with shame at his forgetfulness, hastily composed his features to gravity, he said kindly, "Nay, there is no need to look so solemn, my child; glad am I that you should be merry at times; we must not keep the bow always bent."

Jean looked up inquiringly; the phrase was new to him.

"You wonder what I mean," said the Duke, speaking very slowly, but with clearness; "I am thinking of a fable which my dear and noble friend the Maréchal de Boucicaut, once told me. Shall I try to find breath to tell it you? I know you love stories."

"But I do not love to tire you, my lord," said the boy anxiously.

"Nay, I have strength enough for this, the tale is but short; thus it runs: There was once on a

time a very holy man, a hermit, who, each day, after he had prayed, used to play for a while with certain little birds which he kept for his amusement: and it happened one afternoon that a gentleman went by who was carrying a bow, and seeing the hermit thus employed, he said to himself, 'If this hermit were so holy, he would be always at prayers, and not playing with birds.' Guessing his thoughts, the good father accosted him, begging him to draw his bow, and to keep it always drawn. He replied, No; for he should spoil his bow by keeping it always on the stretch. To which the hermit answered, 'Fair son, thus it is with human nature, which will not suffer man to continue constantly in contemplation or other labours, without a little recreation. It is better to play sometimes, in order that one may be more prompt and ready to work.' That is the story; now how do you like its moral?"

"I like it very much, Sire," said the boy brightly, his face dimpling into smiles again; "and I thank you greatly for telling it me; but I am afraid my good master, Father Germain, would say that I am but too ready to play, and keep my bow so much unbent, that oftentimes its string gets slack."

"Ah, that must not be," said Louis gravely; "I would have you a diligent student, for your masters tell me that you have talent more than common, and that it will be your own fault if you fail to become eminent in learning. It is my wish that in another year's time you should go to the University, and I have charged my lady-wife to provide that my wishes in this respect be carried out; see that while there you devote yourself heartily to your

studies, and take only such recreation as is needful and right. You will not forget this my command?"

"No, that will I not!" said the lad earnestly. Then rather timidly he added, "The Maréchal de Boucicaut is a very valiant knight, is he not, my lord? I remember hearing some brave stories

told concerning him."

"Ay, there is not a braver knight in France than my old brother-in-arms," said Louis, raising himself on his elbow, his eyes kindling with a spark of their ancient fire. "He was younger even than you when I took him with me to Rosebecque, and there he did battle stoutly with a Flemish giant who had taunted him with being a child. 'Do the children of your country play at such games?' said he to his dying enemy. I can fancy I hear his voice ring out now, though so many years have passed since then; 'twas I that made him a knight, and at that very time. Ah, those were gallant days!"

"In truth they were," said the grey-headed Jean de Chastelmorant, who had borne the Duke's pennon through many a fierce fray; "but I fear you are wearying yourself, my lord, and—"

"Ah, you are right," said the Duke, sighing; "it were well that I saved my breath for better things. See I have made this child's cheeks glow, and his eyes dance; he would fain have at some Flemish giant, like my friend Boucicaut—would you not, Jean?"

"Yes, Sire," said Jean, with all his heart; and in truth the young pulses were throbbing with eager martial ambition at that moment, and the garb of priest or pilgrim seemed just then but uninviting to the young soul that was longing for the casque and corslet of a man-at-arms.

"I have done ill to speak thus to you," said Louis regretfully; "you must take example by the great Marshal in other things than his prowess in war. He is a most faithful son of Holy Church, and observes her fasting days with such devotion as all would do well to imitate, besides hearing two Masses daily, and keeping a careful guard over his own behaviour and that of his household, among whom he will never suffer any oath or profane word."

Jean listened respectfully, but his thoughts were still with the Flemish giant and the heroic child who had won his spurs on the bloody field of Rosebecque. Louis unwittingly had touched a dangerous chord, which could not at once cease to vibrate.

He had meant to speak quite differently, and to give grave counsel, but he was too tired to speak more now, and was obliged to defer this till the next day, when, with broken voice but most touching earnestness, he laid on the child his last behests, and by his wise and beautiful words, made the priesthood seem again a noble thing in Jean's eyes, nobler even than the vocation of a warrior, and as full of scope for chivalrous aspiring souls.

One more day, and the power of speech was almost gone, and the death-hour was indeed come. Weeping, Jean drew near the bed on that sorrowful 19th of August, and kissed the kind hand that was extended to him for the last time; then drawing back, knelt humbly in the far part of the room,

while the dying voice called in feeble accents on the Blessed Virgin, S. Denis, and S. Louis, for help in this mortal agony; and the heart, we will trust, soared higher yet, even to the King of Saints, the symbol of whose sacrifice Louis held firm within his arms. With that cross clasped to his breast. with the voice of his loved confessor in his ears. telling of the Passion of our LORD, the soul of the good Duke passed gently away. A few hours later. his body was placed on a litter, and carried to the church at Cosnes, where with tapers burning round it, and priests praying beside it, it lay in state, while high and low flocked to take their last look at the well-loved face. We are told that along the road by which the corpse was carried, were crowds of people, weeping, and crying out, "Ha, ha! Death, thou hast taken from us this day our defender, who guarded us from all oppressions, who was our prince, our aid, our duke, the bravest man, and of the holiest life that one could find anywhere." &c. &c.; but deeper though more silent grief was in the hearts of those who bore the litter or followed it, for they were mostly of the Duke's own household, and had loved him long and well.

Among these walked the boy, Jean, his face quite pale, his eyes heavy with the tears which he struggled not to shed. Truly at this moment the world seemed a sorrowful place to him, and his spirit longed after Golden Syon, "that blessed country into which an enemy never enters, and from which a friend never goes away."

The good Duke was gone, while bad dukes were left to trouble the realm, and thick clouds of trouble

hovered over "la belle France." There wanted but a few years to Agincourt, years of internal dissension, of misery, and rebellion; and meanwhile, the noble Louis had been taken away from the evil to come, and was laid to rest by loving hands in the mortuary chapel, which he himself had caused to be built in the Priory of Souvigny. In after years, two recumbent figures, representing the Duke and his Duchess, were placed over the tomb, where they remain to this day. His funeral was a simple one, for he had ordered that it should be so, and that the money which would otherwise have been spent in pomp and show should be given to the poor; but he has a goodly monument, and modern travellers tell us that his name is not forgotten among the people of the Bourbonnais, but that even now beside cottage hearths may be heard kindly traditions of the grand old times when "Louis the Good" kept open house in his town of Moulins, and won for himself the love of rich and poor by his large-hearted hospitality and his princely charity.



CHAPTER XIV.

"The mists furl off, and through the vale resplendent
I see the pathway of my years prolong;
Not without labour, yet for labour strong;
Not without pain, but pain whose touch transcendent,
By love's divinest laws
Heart unto heart, and all hearts upwards, draws."

Poems, by the Author of "John Holifax."

INETEEN years afterwards, on Tuesday, the 29th of March, 1429, just a month after Joan of Arc had commenced her heroic mission, a voung man in the dress of a priest was sitting in one of the turret-chambers of the Castle of Bourbon l'Archambaud, and dipping his pen in the ink-horn which hung at his girdle, inscribed with great care and deliberation the first words of a certain composition of his on a goodly sheet of parchment which lay on the table before him. For very many months from that time, this same young man might be seen at intervals diligently employed upon his task, and oftentimes with an aged knight beside him, from whose lips he appeared to be gathering many of the details which were afterwards carefully written down by his fluent pen. At length his labours came to

a conclusion; had we been there to look over his shoulder and read the last words written by that willing yet now weary hand, this is what we should have seen—"Et est le livre compilé par le non-sachant Cabaret, pauvre pélérin, riche de plaisir et de joie en ce que Dieu et gentillesse que tant aima ont permis l'œuvre présent à bonne fin estre achevé."

Can this "Cabaret" be our little republican, the son of the quondam Maillotin, Jacques le mécontent? Let us turn to the dedication of the booka grand page, rich in illuminations, and adorned by countless flourishes—and we shall see. read that the work is dedicated to Charles Count of Clermont, eldest son of Jean Duke of Bourbon, Count of Forêt, &c. &c., and has been undertaken at his command by "Jean d'Orronville, Picard, nommé Cabaret, pauvre pélérin," who has derived his information chiefly from the lips of "Honoré Chevalier Jean, Sire de Chastelmorant." And thus we find our little Jean a grown man now, and an author to boot; one who has been on pilgrimage, and is in high favour with "gentillesse," spite of his obscure origin.

And what is this work of his, which has been such a labour of love, and over the finished pages of which he lingers with honest pride, retouching here and there, and adding the grace of a quotation or a classical allusion? Can you doubt? It is the biography of his childhood's friend, of the object of his boyish hero-worship, and his life-long reverence; it is a memoir of Louis III., Duke of Bourbon. Was ever memoir written with more enthusiasm for its subject, with more loving care, more

evident delight? We think not. And though the young priest modestly describes himself as "non-sachant," we are not altogether inclined to accept this humble estimate of his acquirements, for we find him learned in ancient and modern tongues, quoting Sophocles and Bocaccio, and rounding his sentences neatly, like one well versed in literature, and modestly ambitious of the graces of style.

The little idle scholar who so shocked the good monks of S. Germain l'Auxerrois, has evidently mended his ways in later years, and proved an apt and clever pupil. The Duke's noble old standardbearer, Jean de Chastelmorant, wonders much at the ready writing of the young clerk, and marvels how the reminiscences which dropped from him piecemeal and in unstudied language, have shaped themselves into such stately order and such flowing sentences in the goodly manuscript before him. He nods his head approvingly as the writer reads it aloud to him, and affirms that in his opinion it is more than equal to that "Livre des fais et des bonnes mœurs du Roi Charles V.," of Christine de Pisan's, which was such a favourite book of the late Duke's. and that the Count of Clermont will be abundantly satisfied with it. Jean's brown cheek reddens ingenuously at the cordial praise, and his frank eyes brighten; the face which while it was bent over the writing seemed so grave and thoughtful, resumes now its natural radiance; and a very beautiful face it is, with thorough manly beauty: not of an aristocratic type certainly, but none the less real and picturesque.

Very much has happened since we saw him as a

boy, walking beside the corpse of his dear and honoured patron. Agincourt has been fought, and Jean Duke of Bourbon taken prisoner there. Charles le bien-aimé is dead; and his son, the seventh of the name, is reigning, having been rescued from sloth by the heroic Maid of Orleans, and crowned at Rheims; and just now-ah, shame!-that noble maid has been allowed to perish under the hands of her captors, foully done to death in the market-place of Rouen. The flames of that funeral pyre have scattered sparks of fiery indignation throughout France; even here in the Bourbonnais, far away alike from the scene of her victories and her sufferings, they are talking of La Pucelle-of the marvels of her young heroic life, of the sorrows of her And though some whisper dark hints of magic, and say that the Bishop of Beauvais was justified in condemning her as a sorceress, many more have enshrined her history in their hearts in reverent sympathy; and among these is Jean d'Orronville, whose gallant spirit throbbed with ecstasy in the day of her triumph, and who thinks now with bitter grief of her untimely fate. He is fiercely indignant against the English, whose iniquities (as he considers them) are rendered all the blacker in his eves by the fact that they hold his liege lord, the Duke of Bourbon, in captivity, and have never let him revisit his own fair territories, since, by the fortune of war, he became their prisoner on the fatal field of Agincourt; for our friend Jean can hate as energetically and love as warmly as ever, only his hate is less personal and more reasonable than of old; his love deeper, but more restrained in its expression. Charles of Clermont only guesses at the young priest's devotion to him by his zeal to serve him, by the shining light in his beautiful eyes when they meet and greet; the reticence of manhood has quenched that frank irresistible impulse to tell out his affection, which made Jean as a child so openly loving to Duke Louis and his son, so almost presumptuous in his attempts to testify the warmth of his regard. There is only one person in the world now to whom the young priest offers caresses, whom he calls by any endearing name: that person is an old man, bed-ridden, and nearly childish, an inmate of the Hospital of S. Julien, and never likely now to quit that kindly shelter till he is carried forth from it to his grave.

To see this old man Jean wends his way on the afternoon when his book is finished. He is a person of some consideration now—a trusted servant of the Count's, a prime favourite with Chastelmorant and the other old knights who remember him as their beloved Duke's protégé, and moreover, a certain prestige surrounds him from the fact of his having been on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land; but for all that, he is in no wise ashamed of his obscure parentage—of the poor crippled pensioner in the Hospital of S. Julien. Had he any home of his own, he would take the old man thither, and nurse him tenderly; but he has none such, neither has he become rich in worldly wealth. Since he returned from pilgrimage, and while engaged on the Duke's biography, he has had lodgings in the Castle; now that his task is over, he expects to be summoned to join Charles of Clermont, who is with the army; and except for leaving his father, the summons will be welcome. "Brave work of shriving the dying upon the battle-fields," Brother Martin had promised him long ago; and the man's heart is as ready as ever the child's was for the dangerous yet blessed service.

Arrived at the hospital, he pauses for a moment to sprinkle himself with holy water and utter a prayer in the chapel; then he passes on into the sick chamber. The old man is lying on the very couch which was the death-bed of his faithful wife; he is in a kind of doze, but when Jean bends over him, kissing him warmly on both cheeks, he opens his eyes and smiles. It is a worn wrinkled face, but less harsh in its expression than in the old days when a smile scarce ever shone there; and it is not a dying face by any means; the old man looks as if he might live some time yet.

"Is it you, my son?" he asks, lifting his head feebly. "I have been wanting to see you, and was wondering to myself if you were like your mother, who comes only in dreams; but I know when you are away it is because you have gone on pilgrimage

to pray for me."

Jean takes the aged trembling hand in his own substantial grasp: "I am not a dream, you see, dear father, and I came back from pilgrimage some time ago. The reason why I came not to see you this last day or two was because I have been finishing writing my book—the life of my gracious friend and master, Duke Louis, whom you remember."

"Is he gone to the wars?" asks the old man,

whose mind is wandering.

"Nay, he is gone to his rest long ago; it is Duke Jean who went to the wars and was taken prisoner. Do you not remember, dear father, how kind Duke Louis was to my blessed mother, and to me, when I was a child? It has been a right pleasant task to record his noble deeds; and I thank God that He has enabled me to bring the work to a prosperous ending. Fancy, father, it is quite a huge volume, covering many sheets of parchment."

And he is about to launch into further details of his book, of which, as may be imagined, he is not a little proud, when he sees by his father's vacant gaze that he is not understood, and so checks

himself.

"He knows not what I say, poor soul!" he murmurs; "had my mother lived, she would have rejoiced with me; now I must keep my joy to myself. It is better so, perhaps; vanity dieth sooner when it hath no outlet." And putting away all thought of self, he bends forward, asking tenderly after his father's ailments.

"Thanks, my son, I do fairly well," says the invalid, who, like most, can speak more connectedly of his own state than of any other subject; "there are many aches and pains in my old bones, but I struggle on, the saints be praised! and when I am ill at ease in the night, I put out my hand and touch this, and then methinks I feel somewhat eased."

He points to a flask of Jordan-water and withered palm-branch, which are suspended by a string to the image of the Madonna at the bedside; they are pilgrim-tokens which his son has brought him from the Holy Land, and he attributes to them an efficacy which in reality of course they cannot possess. The notion soothes him, however, and he turns to feel for the scallop-shell which Jean wears as an ornament, and presses it lovingly with his

fingers.

"You did not forget your mother or me, when you knelt at the holy shrine," he says. "Your poor mother! it comforted her when she lay a-dying, to think you would go thither; and now you have come back in time for me to see you before I die. Do you think it is all forgiven—all the past?" and his eyes turn with restless anxiety to Jean's sympathizing face. "You can shrive me, can you not? for you are a priest, and a saint already, like your mother."

Jean's eyes fill with tears—slow tears from a deep source, for his father's words have touched him to the quick. A saint! oh, far from that yet! a sinner rather, struggling still with fiery temper, with proud ambition, with all too ready vanity, with a thousand worldly passionate thoughts and impulses, which a saint, as he believes, would have mastered long before.

"I am no saint, dear father," he says softly, "only a poor sinful man; nevertheless it is true that I have been called to the priesthood, and that holy Mother Church has given me power to shrive men from their sins: and glad in sooth am I to think that her message of pardon can come to you through my lips. None can know so well as I how true has been your repentance."

And then he lays aside for a while the character

of the caressing respectful son, and shows himself only as the priest and teacher, while the old man falters forth the story of the griefs which burden him, of the sins which he can remember since last No words can describe the deep peace that falls on him when he hears the absolution in his son's voice. Who could have foreseen in the old days, when Jean, a frolicsome and somewhat graceless child, played at his father's knee, and learnt from him evil lessons of insolence and rebellion. that they would ever stand in such a strange and holy relation to each other as priest and penitent? that the son would become the preacher of righteousness, the father the meek learner? the good Duke, and Lord Louis—they, under Providence, had brought this about; perhaps Jean fancied them invisibly present with him at this supreme moment of his life.

As for poor Jacques, he had still to wait and to endure; living on wonderfully, as so many do, in a world in which their work seems ended, living on in utter infirmity, while thousands younger and stronger died around him; but he was learning patience, and he would live unmurmuring; the Judean palm-branch, type of heavenly victory, evermore before his failing eyes; the blessing of his son, the pilgrim priest, evermore resounding softly

through his heart.

One more scene, and we have done.

Charles, Count of Clermont, pays a brief visit to he Bourbonnais, for he has the charge and adminstration of all his father's "terres et seigneuries" the Duke's absence, and wishes to see if all is going on well there. Jean takes this occasion to present the memoir of Duke Louis, which is approved of by Charles and his noble friends as a right goodly work; and the young Count gives the author a purse of gold, and cordial thanks and praises to boot. Jean reserves a few gold pieces to provide comforts for his father; we will see presently what he does with the others. He is to return with Charles to the camp, but he makes an earnest petition that before doing so he may be allowed to go to Auxerre to perform a work of penitence and of charity which he has vowed to Charles is rather startled by the accomplish. request, and thinking that there may be some danger in the expedition—as Auxerre is within the territories of the Duke of Burgundy, who takes the side of the English-endeavours to dissuade the young priest from it; but Jean is urgent, and undaunted by the thought of danger, and at length the Count yields.

We will not follow our hero through the difficulties of the journey, but will see what his errand is when he reaches the city. He goes straight to the great monastery of S. Germain l'Auxerrois, from which that of Paris was an off-shoot, and demands if it be true, as he has heard, that some of the monks from the Parisian monastery have, since the occupation of Paris by the English, taken refuge in the mother house, and that the name of one of these is Brother Martin. He is answered that it is so, and that both Brother Martin, and another brother from Paris, Colombe by name, are now engaged in teaching in the great school for

which the town of Auxerre is famous. He prays to speak with them, and is shown into the parlour of the monastery, where after awhile they come to He recognizes them both immediately, though the hair of the elder monk is silvered now, and his stately figure somewhat bent; while Brother Colombe has lost his youthful freshness and colour, though still retaining his dove-like expression of peace. Jean feels more awe in Brother Martin's presence than he used in his pert childhood; the little latent feeling of conceit which has been in his mind since his success as an author, dies out now as he stands before his severe master, and he recalls himself to the monk's memory humbly enough, describing himself simply as a poor priest and pilgrim, to whom the Bourbon family have showed much kindness, without saying a word of how high he stands in the favour of the Count of Clermont, or of what he has done to merit this. Brother Colombe listens with interest, and speaks a few kind words of recognition and welcome, but is then obliged to return to his school-class, whilst his companion tarries for a time to talk with Jean. Brother Martin converses with his old pupil a little coldly perhaps at first, looking at him, as in days of yore, with that piercing gaze which seems as if it must read his verv soul.

"Have you found out that there is brave work to be done by priests as well as by knights?" he asks, recalling that conversation which had made such an impression on Jean's boyish mind.

Jean's colour rises in his brown cheeks, and his eyes kindle, but he replies modestly and briefly—

"Yes, my Father."

"And you are well content, then, to have been

called to the priesthood?"

"More than content," Jean answers, his voice full of repressed feeling. He is thinking of the cripple in the Hospital of S. Julien, of the blessed moment when he stood by his father's bedside, uttering the healing words of pardon which the

Church had given him authority to deliver.

"I have a message to you, my Father," he says, raising his eyes again to the monk's face; "one on whom you once denounced the wrath of God, thanks you for having borne witness to the truth which condemned him, and prays you to send him your forgiveness. Do you remember the rioters who killed a tax-collector in the Church of S. Jacques, years ago, just when the revolt of the Maillotins was beginning?"

"Yes; and I remember well that your father Is it of him you speak? was among them.

thought he had been dead ere this."

"No, he still lives, though in sore sickness and infirmity; but I knew not that you knew him,"

savs Jean with a start.

"Yes, I recognised his face on the day when there was a procession on behalf of the Duke of Berri; do you not remember calling my attention to him by your rebellious efforts to get away from me and go to him? You made me feel the necessity of dealing more sharply with you than I had done before; for his son, I knew, could not be otherwise than ill-trained at home."

Jean finds this speech somewhat difficult to bear.

"My father is an altered man now," he says a little indignantly; "and even in those days he was ever a good father to me. I have a message to you from him, as I said; he prays you to believe that he is penitent for having taken part in deeds of violence, and having defiled the sanctuary of S. Jacques; and he begs you of your charity to send him some word of forgiveness. Also he wishes to confess to you," and here Jean's clear tones become low and stifled. "that it was he who incited Matthieu to set fire to your school-house, in the year 1404. The sin has lain heavy on his soul ever since, and has been bitterly repented of; it well-nigh killed my sainted mother, who took it to heart as if it had been her own. I knew nought of it at the time. I thought, as all did, that the fire had arisen by accident, but I have heard it from his own lips since."

"Ah, I ever thought there was more in the matter than the provost's men discovered!" exclaims Brother Martin; and Jean can tell by the tone of his voice how bitterly he still resents the injury to his cherished school. "Had not the poor wretch Matthieu himself perished in the flames I would have had it sought into more carefully."

Jean's colour is so intense now that it seems to scorch his cheeks, his eyes seek the ground; the burden of his father's shame is on him, as it had been on his mother for so many weary years. He finds it hard to have to confess the old man's past iniquities to so pitiless a judge as Brother Martin.

There is a painful pause, and the young priest's eart is heavy, patience and humility struggling herein with pride and indignation; then, as once

before, there comes to him a joyful marvellous surprise—compassionate forgiving words from the stern monk's lips.

"Ill would it become me to refuse forgiveness to one who is penitent," he says, with a sudden change of manner, the result doubtless of a sharp struggle with himself; "and so far as mine own personal pardon can avail, your father may be at ease, for I accord it to him freely. Though the LORD did drive out with a scourge of small cords them who defiled His temple in the days of His flesh, we are not forbidden to hope that some of those misguided men may afterward have been received unto repentance and amendment. trust it may be with your father; the scourge of sickness and sorrow hath been laid on him, not without avail, as it seems; and may CHRIST in His pity assoil him from all his sins, especially from the sin of having incited another to the crime of arson, and so perchance brought damnation on that unhappy soul, and injury to many!"

"Amen," says Jean solemnly; but he understands better than ever before why his mother's heart broke, and how heavy was the cross she had carried throughout the painful years when he in childish unconsciousness scarce knew what grief

meant.

"I think, my son," continues the old monk, gravely but not unkindly, "that your father's history should be a warning to you to resist manfully even the smallest temptations of Satan; for there are of a surety in your nature passions as fierce as those which have so led him astray; and unless you

master the lesson of self-discipline, which as a child you were so unwilling to learn, you may be hurried into crime some day before you are aware. need is there for Christian men to guard themselves in these evil days, when temptations to all manner

of wickedness do so abound."

"True, Father," says Jean quietly; and surely there cannot be a better proof that he has learnt already much of that self-discipline, which the monk so earnestly enjoins on him, than the fact that he makes no boast of having done so; that he says no word of the stern unremitting check which he keeps on those fiery passions, the existence of which in himself he is ready to admit. He has not a place among the world's heroes—his name is scarcely known to fame, though a few know it in connection with that beautiful little biography of his patron; yet he is a hero by the right of having learnt to rule his spirit, which is better, Solomon tells us, than taking a city; and the brow which for one short day long ago felt the pressure of a crown has something royal in its calm. As he stands before his old master, a child no longer, but a man in the prime of strength, with a steadfast heroic soul shining out of his splendid eyes, the old man's heart goes forth to him with an irrepressible bound of affection, and he says more warmly than Jean has ever heard him speak before. "God and His saints bless you, my son! my hopes for you are stronger than my fears, for I see that the Almighty has given you a brave and true heart wherewith to do brave work for Him."

"It was well done of you to come hither, and

we are right well pleased to see you—are we not, Brother Colombe?" he adds a moment after, as that brother re-enters the room and approaches Jean.

"Ay, truly we are," says Brother Colombe. "I did ever think that you would grow to be a wise and good man; and verily we need such in these times. How fares it with your learning? I heard you were a diligent student at the University."

"Assuredly I like books better than I used." replies Jean, with a sweet humorous glance, which is indescribably winning. "I fear I gave you much trouble, my Fathers, in old days, by my idleness and stubbornness; but you did contrive to implant in me a love for learning, nevertheless, and I thank you heartily; my little stock of knowledge, such as it is, has enabled me to do a small service to the Count of Clermont lately, for which he has most richly rewarded me. Would it please you to accept this offering out of my abundance?" and he modestly proffers to Brother Martin the purse of gold which Charles had bestowed on him. "I would fain offer it towards the prosperity of your school at Paris; but if that no longer exists, be pleased to apply it to the needs of the school here."

Brother Martin as he takes the purse, is astonished

at its size and weight.

"Nay, my son," he says, "this is too rich a gift to receive from one of your degree; it is such as a prince might give, and truly from a prince it would be very welcome, for we have good hopes when these troublous days are over, of re-establishing our school in the good city of Paris, and there will be much need of money at the outset."

"Then prythee overlook my low degree, and pleasure me by accepting it," says Jean, smiling; "it is honestly mine to give, I do assure you."

He sees that Brother Martin still hesitates, for to take such a large gift from a brother priest is different from taking it from some rich noble or burgess, whose soul might be supposed to need the benefit of such charity to outweigh its sins; and drawing still nearer, he whispers—

"I beseech you, Father, take it; the burning of the school-house will not lie so heavily on my father's heart or mine, if we can think that we have done some little thing, though tardily, towards atoning for the injury. Accept it, I entreat you, and give me your blessing, for I must be gone; the Count expects me."

Brother Martin can refuse no longer, nor does he conceal his gratitude and delight. The future re-establishment of that once prosperous school at Paris lies so near his heart, that Jean's benefaction is inexpressibly welcome.

The Brothers will by no means permit Jean to depart at once; they prevail on him to remain at the monastery that night, for rest and refreshment, which in truth he greatly needs; and with pardonable pride they show him the treasures of the mother-house—the exquisite church, rich in costliest adornments; the splendid library, stored with countless folios; the immense school-room, where hundreds of boys have been instructed in all sound learning rer since the days of Charles le Chauve.

Then on the morrow he sets forth on his return to Moulins, bearing a message of pardon and hope for his father, and carrying a light buoyant heart within his breast. Dark clouds of trouble still rest over the fair land of France, but he thinks he can discern a promise of future brightness; his motto is not that of Orlando at Roncesvalles, "A good heart, and no hope;" but rather the device adopted by his own beloved Duke Louis, "Ce joyeux mot "Espérance,"

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